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The METAL MONSTER MURDERS
COMPILED BY DAVID V. REED



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STORIES

MAMMOTH DETECTIVE — Published quarterly by ZIFF-DAVIS PUBLISHING COMPANY at 540 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 11, Illinois. New York office, Empire State Building, New York, 3, N. Y. Washington office, Earle Building, Washington, 4, D. C. Subscription $2.50 for 12 issues; Canada $3.00, Foreign $3.50. Subscribers should allow at least two weeks for change of address. All communications about subscriptions should be addressed to the Director of Circulation, 540 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, 11, Ill. — Volume 3 Number 4

NOVEMBER 1944

Contents

FEATURES

Front cover painting by James Axelrod, illustrating a scene from "Come Home to Murder."
Back cover painting by James Axelrod, depicting a "Picture Crime."

Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations

William B. Ziff, Publisher; B. G. Davis, Editor; Raymond A. Palmer, Managing Editor; Howard Browne, Assistant Editor; Herman R. Bollin, Art Director; Malcolm Smith, Associate Art Director; H. G. Strong, Circulation Director; H. J. Morganroth, Production Director



WE HAVE a prediction to make. This issue contains a story that you are going to read twice! And maybe more times! We make this prediction because we are presenting one of the most amazing and sensationally good murder mysteries of a different type that we've ever seen. 92-plus thousand words . . . but words that have more than just a story in them. Your editor has already read this story four times in the process of buying it and preparing it for MD's pages—and when he gets time to settle down and go through it at one sitting, he's going to read it again!

"THE Metal Monster Murders" is that kind of a story—the more times you read it, the more you find in it. But before you read it the first time, let us give you a few fair warnings.

FIRST, when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote his famous "Hound Of The Baskervilles," he may have felt that he was introducing a wierdness and strangeness into his story which had never before been equalled. And he might have wondered how it would be received. We all know how it was received; readers of detective fiction like the eerie and the strange in their mystery stories!



"I'm all caught up with my work, Butch. Mind if I run off a few ration books for the wife?"

NATURALLY, we do not intend to infer that "The Metal Monster Murders" is anything like Doyle's famous story, nor is it a take-off. This new story is as different and new to the mystery field as Sir Arthur's classic was in its time. And therefore, we want to warn you to be very careful when you read that you do not jump to conclusions. *Don't believe all you read*—and by the same token, be careful what you *disbelieve!*

HERE, we say, is a story that is one of the finest mystery plots ever conceived. And we say too, that it is one of the most logical, convincing, and completely worked out murder stories ever written. Its author, David V. Reed, is noted for his uncanny ability to tie up threads of plot complication into neat, unassailable bundles. He is also noted for his thoroughness. But most of all, he is noted for his imagination. So, be warned! When the monster strikes, be careful what your reason tells you to believe. You might be wrong.

NEXT, we believe this story to be correct in its technical background to an amazing degree. It is an education in the psychology of a murderer, and it is a revelation of the workings of the minds of ordinary people under the stress of that which they cannot understand, and which they fear.

LASTLY, we believe that in this story you will find a murderer building up the most unusual alibi ever conceived—and we predict that you will not be able to "solve" either the crime or the "alibi" in advance. Yet, all the clues are there, and we gleefully invite you to "stick your neck out."

WHEN the story is over, you will find that you will be able to go over it again, and ferret out hundreds of new clues even the author has been unaware existed. Your editor is still having a barrel of fun digging them out!

AS A last remark, when we call Mr. Reed the "author" of this story we are overstepping our responsibility. Some of this story—how much we dare not hazard—is *true!* And we firmly believe that that is why it is so perfect in its construc-

(*Concluded on page 8*)



(*Concluded from page 6*)

tion. It has the ring of sincerity that only truth can have.

WHEN we had the cover painted for this issue, we selected a story other than the lead novel —because we felt that it would be unfair to place a limitation on the imagination you will need to read the lead story. Also, we quite frankly could not find an artist who could create anything with a brush to equal what Mr. Reed has created with his typewriter. A false initial impression of this story would be a serious handicap to the reader. However, the story we did pick is a fine one also. "Come Home To Murder," by Bruno Fischer (who wrote one of the most popular novels to appear to date in *Mammoth Detective*—"Murder Wears A Skirt" which was later published in book form) certainly should appeal to you.

IN ADDITION to a longer-than-book-length novel in this issue, and two novelets, we have eight short stories. We'll just list them with no comment except to say we liked them and we think you will too . . . and to point out that you still get your money's worth no matter how long the novel.

"LADY In Black" by Vincent Aagard—here we have another yarn by an author who needs no prodding of your memory to make you recall who he is. A newcomer to *Mammoth Detective's* pages is Paul Selonke, with a brilliant novelet called "The Red-Headed Murder Maker" which is one you'll have a lot of fun figuring out. It has some neat twists, and a clever surprise—plus lots of suspense. "Clean Slate" by H. Wolff Salz is the kind of short-short detective fans have come to expect from this clever writer. Stan Knowlton comes in for his share of honors in the short-short department with "Not Suited For Murder." Incidently there's a little story behind this yarn that we can't tell in full because it would give away the story for you; but when the art department delivered the illustration it was a dead give-away! We fixed it up with a hacksaw! Those artists . . . just the one thing they shouldn't put in, they add, gratis!

KEITH EDGAR shows up in *Mammoth Detective* with "Stained Fingers" which is one of those "war-plant sabotage" stories with a new twist. Richard W. Bishop gives us a "Feature Attraction—Murder," which takes place in a picture theater atmosphere. If you think they don't mean it when they say "smoking in the outer lobby only" read this one! William Lawrence Hamling—recently out of the army (where he served as a lieutenant of infantry) because of a land-mine explosion—contributes (naturally!) a mystery with a wartime slant. It's called "Death Rides A Convoy." The lineup ends with Ted Stratton's dramatic pronouncement of doom "Die, Mr. Spraggins!" Poor little Spraggins . . . never harmed anybody in his life, and he's got to die!

WE ALWAYS like to know the facts about how the other half lives. This issue we have No. 63511 of the Ohio State Penitentiary giving us the lowdown. "I Know A Thousand Burglars" he says, and proceeds to give us the true story of how they operate. You'll learn a lot about how to safeguard your own property from burglars by reading this true story.

VERY unusual news for wartime is the announcement of a new magazine. But we are very pleased to be able to do just that. *Mammoth Detective* has a new brother, and the Ziff-Davis family of fiction magazines (which include *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Adventures* as well as MD) becomes an even bigger family. *Mammoth Mystery* is the title of the new magazine, and it is a direct answer to the demand of readers of *Mammoth Detective* for more mystery stories. Now you can get them, and a lot of them, in a brand new magazine.

HERE'S a few tips on what the first issue, which at this writing is scheduled to appear about September 15, will contain. John Wilstach (co-author of Cecil B. DeMille's "The Plainsman;" author of Paramount's "Under Cover Man;" Fox's "Night Hawk;" besides numerous novels and magazine stories) contributes a 70,000 word novel called "Murder By Magic." Bruno Fischer presents "Bones Will Tell"; Robert Bloch offers "Son Of Rasputin" as his part in launching a brand new book; and David Wright O'Brien takes time between flights in a B-29 to write "Case Of The Cockeyed Cat." Then we have Tom Marvin with "Let's See Somebody Bleed!"; Frances M. Deegan (yes, a lady, but lads, a tough one!) with "Bread And Fury"; Stuart Friedman with "The Blind Man's Ears" . . . which is enough to give you the general idea, which is to be sure you get your copy!

OF COURSE we have plenty of our usual features and departments in this issue. Your letters tell us you like—so we make with more!

JUST as we were writing this column, David Wright O'Brien (one of the characters in David V. Reed's novel in this issue!) walked into our office. On special furlough, he informs us he will be off for the censored theater of action in a few days. Best news was his delivery of a manuscript written in the radio room of a B-17 enroute to Chicago! Yes, a future issue will contain a detective story written in the air! We'll point it out to you when it appears in these pages. *Rap.*



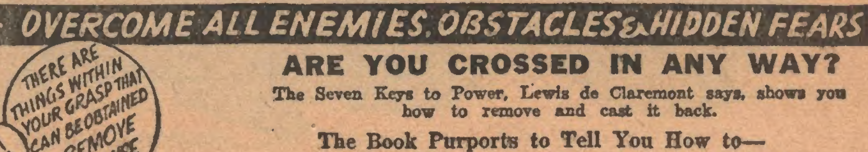
"The 7 Keys to Power alleges to teach," the author says, "All the Mysteries of Life from the Cradle to the Grave—and Beyond. It tells you the particular day and hour to do anything you desire, whether it be in the light of the moon, sun, or in total darkness."

He claims, "The power to get what you want revealed at last, for the first time since the dawn of creation. The very same power which the ancient Chaldeans, Cuthic, Priests, Egyptians, Babylonians, and Sumerians used is at our disposal today."

He says, "Follow the simple directions, and you can do anything you desire. No one can tell how these Master Forces are used without knowing about this book, but with it you can mold anyone to your will."

From this book, He says, "You can learn the arts of an old Science as practiced by the Ancient Priestly Orders. Their marvels were almost beyond belief. You, too, can learn to do them all with the instructions written in this Book," Lewis de Claremont claims. "It would be a shame if these things could all be yours and you failed to grasp them."

He claims, "It is every man's birthright to have these things of life: MONEY! GOOD HEALTH! HAPPINESS! If you lack any of these, then this book has an important message for you. No matter what you need, there exists a spiritual power which is abundantly able to bring you whatever things you need."



THERE ARE THINGS WITHIN YOUR GRASP THAT CAN BE OBTAINED TO REMOVE THE CAUSE

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The Seven Keys to Power, Lewis de Claremont says, shows you how to remove and cast it back.

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- Obtain property.
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THE VOW HAS NOW BEEN BROKEN

This book, he claims, shows you the secrets of old which when properly applied makes you able to control the will of all without their knowing it. If you have a problem and you wish to solve it, he says, don't hesitate. Advertisements cannot describe nor do this wonderful book justice. You must read it and digest its meaning, to really appreciate its worth.

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IF I HAD KNOWN that some Americans would be using pockets to hold all the extra money they're making these days, I never would have invented them.

Pockets are good places to keep hands warm.

Pockets are good places to hold keys . . . and loose change for carfare and newspapers.

But pockets are no place for *any* kind of money except actual expense money these days.

The place—the *only* place—for money above living expenses is in War Bonds.

Bonds buy bullets for soldiers.

Bonds buy security for your old age.

Bonds buy education for your kids.

Bonds buy things you'll need later—that you can't buy now.

Bonds buy peace of mind—knowing that your money is in the fight.

Reach into the pocket I invented. Take out all that extra cash. Invest it in interest-bearing War Bonds.

You'll make me very happy if you do.

You'll be happy too.

WAR BONDS to Have and to Hold

ZIFF-DAVIS PUBLISHING COMPANY

This is an official U.S. Treasury advertisement—prepared under auspices of Treasury Department and War Advertising Council


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SHOWER
No SIR! —ATLAS Makes Muscles Grow Fast!
Will You Let Me PROVE I Can Make YOU a New Man?
LET ME START SHOWING YOU RESULTS LIKE THESE
5 inches of new Muscle
"My arms increased 1½", chest 2½", forearm ⅞"."—C. S., W. Va.
What a difference!
"Have put 3½" on chest (normal) and 2½" expanded."—F.S., N. Y.
Here's what ATLAS did for ME!
John Jacobs BEFORE
John Jacobs AFTER
For quick results I recommend CHARLES ATLAS
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GAINED 29 POUNDS
"When I started, weighed only 141. Now 170."—T. K., N. Y.
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I DON'T care how old or young you are, or how ashamed of your present physical condition you may be. If you can simply raise your arm and flex it I can add SOLID MUSCLE to your biceps—yes, on each arm—in double-quick time! Only 15 minutes a day—right in your own home—is all the time I ask of you! And there's no cost if I fail.
I can broaden your shoulders, strengthen your back, develop your whole muscular system INSIDE and OUTSIDE! I can add inches to your chest, give you a vise-like grip, make those legs of yours lithe and powerful. I can shoot new strength into your old backbone, exercise those inner organs, help you cram your body so full of pep, vigor and red-blooded vitality that you won't feel there's even "standing room" left for weakness and that lazy feeling! Before I get through I'll have your whole frame "measured" to a new, beautiful suit of muscle!
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My method—"Dynamic Tension"—will turn the trick for you. No theory—every exercise is practical. And, man, so easy! Spend only 15 minutes a day in your own home. From the very start you'll be using my method of "Dynamic Tension" almost unconsciously every minute of the day—walking, bending over, etc.—to BUILD MUSCLE and VITALITY.
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NAME
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STATE

The METAL MONSTER MURDERS

Compiled by

DAVID V. REED


KOHN

Before your very eyes you see a monster kill a lovely girl! But can you believe what you see? Here is the most terrifying, mysterious, weird tale of murder you have ever read!

A PREFACE BY THE EDITOR

THE main reason that David V. Reed is called the "collector" and not the author of this story is the fact that the following pages do not, strictly speaking, constitute a story in the usual sense of the word. Rather, as the by-line indicates, Mr. Reed has here collected and related the raw matter of what might well have been one of his best stories. Thereby hangs not only this tale, but the decision to present it in this way.

It began some months ago when Mr. Reed came into possession of the diary of Elliot Hammond. Is the name familiar? The editor is frank to confess it took some prodding before he remembered it, and then only because he knew people who had known Hammond, and who figured to some degree in the events hereinafter described. Many readers will probably recall the name as they read, for parts of this strange tale achieved a brief notoriety just a few years ago.

It is more certain that the reader will recognize other names more readily, especially the reader familiar with this and other magazines published by the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. This is partly due to Hammond's friendships with Mr. Reed and other authors, partly to the nature of the story itself. If this had not been true, it is safe to presume this manuscript would never have seen print in this magazine.

What follows, then, is a collection of fact, conjecture, documents, interviews—even first person addresses to the reader by the author. It is not always easy to read, and understanding it is a process in which the reader himself must play a part, but it is vastly exciting and very rewarding. It is a journey through the minds of several men. Mr. Reed has arranged the component elements to form a montage rather than a series of pictures. The diary has not been edited in any way by anyone. Of this, if of nothing else, the editor is quite satisfied.

The rest must remain for the reader to judge. The editor does not wish to be placed in the position of presenting this as a true story, if only because its truth cannot be, or has not been, *disproven.* Nor can he, in fairness to the reader, explain this seeming paradox at this point. Nor does he incline to call it fiction alone! The editor does, however, invite the reader to correspond and express his views and his own theories. All such correspondence will be forwarded to Mr. Reed, for whatever answer may be required.—R.A.P.

Three women and a man die—murdered by a metal horror. Yet two of them still stalk the streets; to provide a mad alibi!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Listed in the order of their appearance in this collection with no reference to their actual relationship to each other. The reader is warned to form no premature opinions concerning such relationships; and in case of doubt or confusion, is advised to refer to this list.)

DR. LEOPOLD SCHUMER. Viennese psychiatrist of repute, owner and operator of a private sanitarium at Woodbourne, New York.
DAVID V. REED. Noted author of scientific and fantastic fiction.
ELLIOT HAMMOND. A newspaper feature writer.
JIM SHILLING. One of the men in charge of the large scrap depot of the city scrap drive, near Jamaica Bay. Author of a novel called "The Silent Room." A man who has traveled over much of the world.
ALFRED BESTER. A writer.
JULES BLACK. A literary agent.
MAUDE WILLIAMS. A "lady"-about-town.
CRAIG ELLIS. A writer.
JOHN BROOME. A writer.
HENRY KUTTNER. A writer.
TAMARA DENISOV. An authoress.
ROLLIE BESTER. An authoress and radio actress.
DAVID WRIGHT O'BRIEN. A writer.
MANLY WADE WELLMAN. A writer.
JEAN LOWELL. Greenwich Village artists' model.
MALCOLM O'DAY. District attorney.
CHARLES WELLS. Defense attorney.
JUSTICE REVERE. Criminal court judge.
LEE ROGOW. An authority on literature; capable of quoting verbatim from a great number of literary works, including the modern.
DR. MORTIMER CAMIEL. A psychiatrist.
MARIA DENISOV. A ballet dancer.
KATHY GRAY. A photographer's model; also a writer of bad poetry.
JAMES MULVANEY. Head watchman at Acme Reclaiming Corporation, scrap depot on Jamaica Bay.
THOMAS STAPLEY. Night watchman at scrap depot.
MRS. MABEL BAILEY. Owner of a rooming house at 224 Minetta Lane.
HELEN DREW. New York debutante.
STERLING PRYCE. A physician; superintendent of Maywood General Hospital.

(TEXT OF A LETTER FROM LEOPOLD SCHUMER TO DAVID V. REED, OCTOBER 30, 1943)

My dear Mr. Reed:

I have news, really excellent news, for you from your friend, Mr. Hammond. The diary has been started. This morning Mr. Hammond spoke to me at some length and I was, most assuredly, quite delighted. He told me with utmost candor that he begins the writing today and indeed, in the hours since then, he has been at this work. It is the best news possible, is it not? But I write to you now also of another matter, one which may prove to be a matter of great importance.

Mr. Hammond gave me an address which he asked me to send to you. The address is: 17 Tarpon Road. There you will find a small establishment the nature of which is an art shop of antiques and curios, and also, as Mr. Hammond says, of the nature of a pawning-shop for art goods. Mr. Hammond told me that he placed there a large brown box of leather with gold-working and a brass lock. He did not take money for it but placed it there for safe-keeping that last morning. He had not remembered it until last week, and mentioned it to me this morning for the first time.

The receipt is, naturally, lost, but he has a small key for the lock. He will entrust the key to no one, but says you will be able to secure the box if you remind the old gentleman who is the proprietor, of the circumstances under which it was left in his shop. You are to remind him that the man who left it was suffering from a severe nosebleed, and also, his clothes were badly torn. I trust I do not have to elaborate on this?

I must request of you that you investigate this matter most energetically, and, should you find this box, to do whatever is necessary to secure it. Perhaps this letter and an explanation will help. I cannot restrain from telling you of the importance which Mr. Hammond attaches to this box, and, as a consequence, this is important for all of us. It may be that the key to this box is the solution to much we seek to discover.

Since this letter will reach you by Monday, it will allow you enough time to pursue this matter before you come here this next week-end. Therefore, if you have the box, I will expect you to bring it with you. I am confident you will understand my anxiety, and, I trust, act with immediacy. With my most excellent regards, I remain,

Yours sincerely,





(FROM THE DIARY OF ELLIOT HAMMOND)

October 30, 1943

I AM beginning to forget it. Already fragments of the pattern, once so sharply etched in memory that nothing, I thought, would ever disorder them, begin to grow vague. When I think back, sometimes a detail eludes me. It is like walking down a gallery of familiar pictures and suddenly finding a blank canvas among them, and being unable to recall what was there. And then, sometimes there is only a detail . . . a sound more clear than sound . . . the iris of a grey eye contracting . . . a sun-drenched bubble of mud exploding in milky chocolate film from the heat . . . the cold gleam of imagined moonlight on rusting metal. Once I wanted to forget and could not; now to hold on to it, I must put it down here on paper. For some reason, I am afraid to forget. . . .

I DON'T know when it started. Jim didn't know either, as far as I remember—not definitely, that is. It must have been happening all along, and even the last part of it, where the Thing became a conscious thought of Jim's, happened slowly. It was something, you might say, like water freezing; it grew imperceptibly colder until a moment arrived when it froze, but which was the moment? But it was in July, sometime during the July of the last summer before the war.

The war is important to this story.

I was working for my old paper then and they had put me on a feature story on growing production. Part of that story lay in the scrap drive, and that was how I met Jim again. He was working for the scrap collection agency that had contracted to do the job for the entire city. He was one of the men in charge of the largest scrap depot in the city.

Said that way, it doesn't sound like much, and it wasn't much—not in interest or responsibility, or pay, or dignity—but what I mean is the depot itself. There was something about that depot that was, well, more than the work of man.

I remember the first day I saw it. It was some distance at the southern outskirts of the city, near Jamaica Bay, touching the ocean. It was enormous, a huge thing spilled out on waste land. Part of it was on hard, ridged, weed-ridden lots; the greatest part of it lay in a vast muck and oil-black wet of swamps; and part, the smallest part, was more water than land, composed mainly of shallow reefs close to the indefinite ocean shore. This whole great area, easily hundreds of acres, was piled high with waste metal. It was a fantastic mass of stumpy, jagged girders and lithe springs, of bolts and bars and shining wheels, of tin and iron and steel and shavings and bits of exotic metals. It was the dumping grounds for things, and parts of things, that people no longer wanted, and which other people had taken from everywhere in the world. Black and gray and green and bright orange with rust . . . bent, mis-shapen, broken, twisted, torn . . . in strange, distorted heaps and valleys and mountains, it lay in the silence that surrounds the noise of the city, festering in the sun.

This was where Jim Shilling lived. There were officers in two small, old buildings on the hard ground, elevated wooden platforms that ran through the swamps, and a pier over the water. Tied to one end of the pier was an old houseboat, a converted lighter, standing ten feet in water. It was fresh and clean in its white and green paint, with curtained windows and potted flowers on the sills and rails. A broad green awning shaded half the deck, and in that shade was a hammock, a high table beside it, two low wicker chairs and an upright chair before a lower table. On that table, littered with papers held down by paperweights and seashells, was a battered, ancient typewriter. The houseboat was where Jim lived.

They sent me there from the office building. "See Jim Shilling," the man said. "He's the feller to tell you what you want to know."

"Where'll I find him?"

"Out there—see where I'm pointin'? —that's a houseboat. If he ain't walkin' along the beach, he'll be there. He's always there."

I started out across the wooden platforms over the swamps. Not then nor until the moment I saw him did the name mean anything to me. It was like coming across a replica of one's home in a foreign land and not being able to recognize it in its strange surroundings. The name did not even make me think of the Jim Shilling I'd known. It was too remote.

But then, after half an hour's walking, and taking the wrong turns in the swamp until I felt a queer apprehension at the thought of getting lost there, feeling the heat of the sun and not being able to see it, I came out on the platform that led to the pier. I saw Jim as he got up from the typewriter, hearing my leather heels on the planking.



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

HAMMOND'S commentary in the above entry that "There was something about that depot that was . . . more than the work of man" interested me enough to attempt testing it for hindsight. Granted that Hammond believed in the truth of what he wrote, was he perhaps unconsciously touching up his recollections? Was he remembering premonitions where none had been felt?

Obviously this was as difficult to prove as disprove, but I went ahead on the chance that something might come of the attempt. What I did was to interview several of the people who had been to the yards, comparing their reactions to Hammond's and my own. The test seemed worthless until I had the results. I conducted it informally, almost at random, without revealing any objective. Naturally, all these remarks (which I have edited while retaining the context) are still open to the same charge of hindsight, but they carry an impressive weight.

The question I asked was: "What was your reaction to the yards the first time you saw them?"

Three people had little to say; one hardly remembered; one began to cross-question me—so these five I have classified with the minority for whom the yards were merely yards. I must include myself among them. I thought it was the biggest dump I had ever seen and nothing more. I go on to the others:

Al Bester: "You remember that weak epigram I made? Something about a graveyard with half the corpses still stirring . . . something like that . . ."

Jules Black: ". . . terrifically depressed . . . wouldn't want to live anywhere near such a place . . . damn thing frightened me . . ."

Maude Williams: "I took one look at it and was positive it was another of Jules' and Elly's practical jokes."

Craig Ellis: ". . . hated the place . . ."

John Broome: "I remembered it because I'd sailed by many times in a cat-boat and always wanted to go through it . . . looked like the end of the world . . . wondered what the soul of such a thing would be like . . ."

Henry Kuttner: ". . . a wicked travesty . . . a nightmare . . ."

Tamara Denisov: ". . . incredible beauty and strength laid waste by long melancholy . . . something refusing to die . . ."

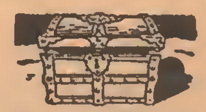
Rollie Bester: ". . . just couldn't stand the place, though I still don't think of it as something ugly . . ."

David Wright O'Brien: ". . . typical of New York, the essence, if you know what I mean. The city hits me the same way every time I visit it, a combination of fantastic beauty and destruction . . ."

Manly Wade Wellman: "Damn good-looking thing . . . made me wish I was a painter; I'd paint it and call it something like A Lesson in Anatomy . . ."

Of these ten people quoted, three are women, seven are men.* The men, with the exception of Black, who is a literary agent, are all practicing writers, as is Miss Denisov. Of the five previously mentioned, three were women. In general, therefore, it would appear that women were less strong in their reactions to the place than men. Miss Denisov's reaction, however, follows the men's pattern very closely. Does this mean that the main factor in reacting to the place was the literary bent of the people involved, rather than their sex? Is it not quite possible that ten people chosen at random, none writers, brought to the place, would have reacted in no special way whatsoever?

I am inclined to believe that the yards furnished the material for the exercising of limber imaginations—something most of these people had. But then, so did Elliot Hammond have imagination, and what is a premonition but imaginary foreknowledge?—D.V.R.



* Readers of MAMMOTH DETECTIVE will remember David Wright O'Brien, one of those quoted here, as the author of "Once Is Enough," which received much commendation in the November 1943 issue. Those readers who are also acquainted with *Fantastic Adventures* and *Amazing Stories*, our sister magazines, will certainly recognize the names of Al Bester, Craig Ellis, John Broome, Henry Kuttner and Manly Wade Wellman whose reputation as writers of ability is undenied. On several editorial trips to New York we ourselves have met the persons mentioned here, and it is our impression and conviction that the comments made by each are typical, and we can have no doubt as to their authenticity.—Ed.

October 31, 1943

THE day was terribly hot. The green awning kept out the white sunshine, but even there, with an occasional sea-swept breeze, everything was hot and sticky. The slabs of ice in the drink Jim made me lasted for half the drink. I reached out for more ice from a towel-wrapped bucket and listened to Jim speaking.

". . . so just about the middle of April I said yes and came out here. It wasn't so bad at all. I had complete privacy, a clean place to live in, even a few minor luxuries—this deck awning, say; it sort of gives me a suburban estate. It's very quiet here, and the pay is more than I need, and once in a while I go into the city and have a beer at George's. And in three months I've almost completed a novel."

I said nothing for awhile. The shock had worn away a little and the drink helped Jim sound sensible. It was three years since I'd last seen him. He was in that last period of despondency before he disappeared. In 1936, a few months after he'd finished college, he had written *The Silent Room* and been acclaimed. And then for two years, after his money was gone, he had been unable to write, and he began to disintegrate little by little. One day he was gone, no one knew where. Sometime afterward I received a card from him, from Peru, and from time to time others got cards from Chile and Uruguay and Trinidad, and from Norway and Denmark and Spain, then once from French Morocco and no more. We thought maybe he had gone to the war with the French, but no one knew. And after awhile, no one cared, I guess.

But he hadn't gone to war. He had wandered through Africa and then gone back to South America, until by degrees, from Haiti finally, he came home. He had come back to New York in the winter, used up the little money he had saved, and taken this job to stay alive, and to try to write again. And he was writing again, so nothing mattered. Why wasn't it as he said, that where or how he lived was unimportant beside the fact that he was working again?

"But it's so lonely here. How can you stand it?"

"It isn't lonely!" he cried. He had lost little of that early enthusiasm. His gestures, like his close-cropped thick hair and easy corduroy trousers, were boyish. His face, long and lean and angular as his body, was a healthy, ruddy copper. "It isn't lonely! Someone's always coming here. And when there aren't people, I can walk along the beach and watch the ships in the harbor and the gulls and all sorts of birds I don't know, sandpipers and others, or sit out on the rocks and watch the waves. Sometimes I lie out there in the sun, with a couple of bottles of beer hanging from a string down into the water, reading a book or listening to my radio. Does that sound lonely?"

"What about the nights?"

"I'm in bed by ten." He laughed. "Oh, it isn't like the old days, I grant you that. I'm up before the hour I'd usually be going to sleep, but what of it? I break the rule often enough not to mind. And I wake up rested, with more energy than I've had in years. I do my job by noon and I'm free. The laundryman picks up my stuff at the office where the milkman leaves milk and the others what small supplies I need. And there's no telephone buzzing in my brain all day, either."

"And the . . . the dump itself?" I'd hesitated to use the word and finally said it because I didn't want to use a patronizing euphuism.

HE DIDN'T seem to mind. "The dump's all right. Sometimes when

the wind shifts I get a whiff of the swamps and it isn't pleasant, but then, you get lots of smells in New York anywhere. Do I mind it more than, say, bacon burning? Or a pungent stew? Perhaps a little. Is it important? Not to me."

"Yes," I said. It wasn't what I had meant, and I wasn't sure exactly what I had meant. It was the dump, all right, but not the dump itself, not its physical characteristics. And yet what else was there about it beyond its physical characteristics? "I don't know," I said, taking it up again. "There's something about this dump that . . ."

He looked at the way I waved my hands. "That what?"

"It's hard to say. It depresses me."

"You mean its not pretty to look at?"

"No," I said slowly. "That's not it at all." I looked at him. "As a matter of fact, there's something almost beautiful about it . . . a very strange and possibly frightening beauty . . . the strength, somehow . . . the thought of all those things. . . ." I started to smile at my own words and Jim was smiling with me.

"It's odd, your thinking of it like that the first time you see it," he nodded. "I confess it's hit me the same way occasionally." For some reason, though there really was no reason yet, he grew a little somber as he spoke. He kept nodding to himself for a minute, his dark eyes focused on the worn hooked rug, then he looked up dreamily and saw me, and began to talk about his book.

Later, we walked together along the beach in the bright sun, our footsteps filling with water as we left them. There was so much to talk about. Years had gone by since our schooldays friendship had been at its height, and things had happened to both of us. To the north there was an airport, and the hum of motors welled up across the bay. The beach was strewn with bits of wood and boxes and rags, among which small birds hunted and sandbathed. The afternoon wore on, and in the evening I had dinner with Jim in his houseboat.

It was a peaceful evening. Jim filled a place in my scheme of things. I found him the old friend I had known and liked so much. And when I left and he invited me to come back, I said I would, and I did. I came back two days later, when I had the afternoon off, and after that I came more or less regularly, two and three times a week. That was before the Thing became known to Jim; after that I was there every night, almost, until the end.

Somewhere between those two periods, I first brought Jean there. It was on one of the afternoons when I took several people to the houseboat, the first time, I think. I'm not sure of it anymore. The main thing is that they got along splendidly from the first moment they saw each other.

The main thing is that they fell in love from the start.

November 1, 1943

SOMETIMES in the afternoon I would sit at the land end of the pier. Jim would be working under the green awning and I would wait for him, listening to the tiny pistol shots that his typewriter keys made, listening to the myriad sounds, the sounds that came and went with the wind and the sounds that were always there. There was a lot to hear, and to see, when you got used to it.

For years ants had been eating away sections of the pier. At the land end where the wood was dry, they had half destroyed several of the pilings where two rails were nailed down. The rails were roads that were constantly clogged

with ant traffic, the free ones running to the piling, the laden ones running back with a tiny tan sliver of wood. The piling itself was mobbed, with three or four ants to the square inch, all tearing away slivers to give to the waiting carriers.

Where the pier left the land and became a structure over the beach as it went to the water, there was an uneven line of tall weeds and wind grass matching the shoreline. Just inland of that line, dipping sharply, was the swamp. Here, among soggy root clumps and cat-tails, all over the sun-baked mud and inches down in the brackish, putrid water, lay the ghost crabs. They were small things, smaller than spider crabs, but one of their claws was relatively huge, as large as the rest of the crab. Their bodies were brown and crusty, but this great claw was a sick, dead white, a clean and ugly thing of bone. They had no use for the claw that I could discover, but wherever they went they dragged that claw along, leaving a scarcely discernible furrow in the mud.

But they never went very far, sometimes in or out of the water or a few inches along the mud. It was as if carrying that claw was so great a burden that they had lost all interest in everything else except the rudiments of survival. They just lay there in the swamp and the bright, hot sun, alive because something had given them life.

November 2, 1943

BUT it was the sounds, yes, mainly the sounds, one of them in particular. I first became aware of it one evening after I left Jim and started back to the gate. It was past seven and the sun was a dusty red and gold in the west. I was already late for a dinner appointment and I was hurrying across the platforms when I heard it.

Purple clouds had momentarily obscured the sun, and until they passed there was a dim, luminescent light that bordered on twilight and yet was too rosy for twilight. I heard the sound then. It was a deep, infinitely deep sound, like a great, choked sigh. It could only have been the effect of a stray gust of wind finding its torturous way through dense, obstructing metal, but it was as haunting as something from the depths of a mighty organ.

There was something about it that made me walk slower, late as I was. I think I wanted to hear it again when I was ready for it. At any rate, I wanted to hear it again, but I didn't. Not then, though I took a long time across the swamps. But I heard it many times after that time, and then I thought I had heard it before that time I noticed it, only I hadn't been especially aware of it. I don't know. Maybe I did, or maybe I now think I did. After it was over, I used to think about all the things I'd seen and heard there, and everything would begin to fit into the pattern, and everything would take on a meaning, sometimes a very subtle meaning, but there if you wanted it. Even the ants and the crabs had a meaning.



(TEXT OF A LETTER FROM DAVID V. REED TO JOHN BROOME, NOVEMBER 2, 1943)

Dear John:

It looks—at least right now—as if I won't be able to come up this week-end, after all. I'm up to my ears in work, and unless I do a lot more than I think I will by Friday, I daren't take a few days off. On top of that, there's a possibility that my sister and her

new soldier husband, the estimable Sgt. Lou, may come in from Columbus, and I'd rather be here to welcome them, especially since he promised to bring that rare edition he picked up in an alley in Paris. So I know you will understand. What's more, I know you will do the great favor I am about to beseech.

I got a letter from old Schumer yesterday, with some very interesting news of Elly Hammond. It appears, from what he says, that Elly has actually started to write that diary he started talking about at the end of September. In addition, he sent me an address via Schumer which I was asked to investigate and to try to find a certain box (odd, isn't it?) which Elly said he had left at this address on that morning. I attach little importance to the quest, but I am hot on the trail. Seems the place Elly described — he knew the address — a broken-down curio shop near the bay shore, is no longer there, but I may still be able to locate this box. The man who owned it died several months ago and all his effects were dumped in a storehouse, from which place his sons have gradually been selling everything. I am to go to the storehouse either Thursday or Friday (when I should be working) to look around.

So what I want you to do is this: go see Elly for me and let me know what is doing. Saturday should be an ideal day, if you can make it. His place is quite near you and I imagine you should have a pleasant and interesting visit. Schumer is a miserable correspondent on the rare occasions when he undertakes to wrestle with the language and I can never be sure I really understand what he is trying to say.

I won't write him until I know definitely, one way or another, about this box, and if I haven't written him by the time you get there Saturday, please explain the difficulties I am having getting my hands on it. But what is more important, look around and see what is going on there and drop me a note with any relevant news. Regards to you and love to your wife.

Dave



November 3, 1943

THE thing about Jean, everybody used to say, was that she was so normal. It was like commending a flower because its roots kept the soil from eroding. Jean was a beautiful girl in many ways. There was a joy she got from living—a warm, never-ending delight and wonder—that she communicated to everyone, and in the end you mixed up her physical attractiveness with the simple beauty of her nature and thought of her as something more than the usual Greenwich Village artists' model—well, the best I can say is that I'd been in love with her for a long time. Or thought I was, which is the same thing, isn't it? I've never been able to answer the question.

But what I started to say was that it was indirectly through Jean that I became vaguely aware of the idea of the Thing. . . .

Seven of us had come out to Jim's houseboat that Sunday afternoon. There was Al and Rollie Bester, Jules Black, the literary agent, and his current passion, Maude Williams, Dave Reed, Jean, and I. We brought out a mass of spaghetti and sausages and fixings and two gallons of Guinea red, and the girls took over the kitchen and went to work. The rest of us sat under the awning and talked and drank Jim's rum with coke. What with everyone there being a writer of one sort or another, Jim finally brought out his novel and read us the opening chapter.

It was very different from anything he'd ever attempted. It began with a description of an old monastery on the Peruvian coast and of the little town that had grown around it. It was written with a reflectiveness and softness quite unlike his earlier, hurried, emphatic style, but here, as in his early work, there was evidence of his considerable talent.

He had barely begun to read when the girls came out and joined us. He read well, and what he read had more of an effect on us than we'd expected. Jean sat on the arm of my wicker chair and listened to him. Once I glanced up at her and I saw the way her eyes lay on Jim, and from that moment, before either of them knew, I knew. Jim was writing of life the way Jean thought about it.

Later we ate and drank the red wine and listened to some of Jim's records, things like Grieg's *Papillons* and Moussorgsky's love music—things that told me Jim had seen Jean too. Toward evening, when our mutual dependency had been loosened a little by the wine, Jim and Jean wandered off along the beach while the rest of us dug up some old jazz records and debated saxes from Pete Brown to Coleman Hawkins and Hodges. We were having a good time when Jim and Jean got back, and Jim immediately became involved in Reed's argument with Black over the virtues of the Reinhardt guitar.

It was one of those free-for-alls where people keep jumping in and dropping out, and after awhile Jean and I were alone against a rail near the pier. Twilight was half gone. The sky was empty and dark, but lighter than the dark, smooth sea. The guitar was playing *Djangology* and we listened in silence until Jean spoke.

"You've known him a long time, haven't you, Elly?"

I nodded. "We went to school together." Presently I said, "Is it what I think it is?"

HER face was relaxed and thoughtful. She wore her dark hair in a careless bun and loose strands moved in the wind. "I don't know," she said. "I've never felt like this before about anyone." She looked at me and touched my arm. "Elly, you understand, don't you?"

I tried to smile. "Sure," I said. "After awhile you stop hoping and begin waiting because you know someone'll come along." I gave her a cigarette and lit hers and mine and in the brief flare of the match I saw her eyes searching my face. It was easier to talk, smoking. "I've never known a better guy, Jean," I said. "Even when he didn't have it. I'm glad for both of you. Honestly—"

I stopped speaking because I was afraid to overdo it. I felt stupid saying things like I'm glad for both of you. But what was there to say? I kept smoking, listening to the music.

"Walk with me a little, Elly," she said. "I want to talk."

So we walked. The tide was too high on the beach to go there, so we went off the pier along the high ridge that bounded the swamps, and then along the wooden ramps in the silent yards where the gaunt piles of metal were still visible in the little remaining light. I told her what I knew of Jim, the good years and the bad, and the ones of which I knew almost nothing. I told her the truth; I thought too much of her to try to soften any of it, even if it had mattered. Occasionally she spoke, to ask a question, to repeat something I'd said. She seemed very distant from me, and I suppose it hurt a little. But that wasn't all. There was something else I felt, something more than the hurt, and yet a part of it, something quite strange. . . .

I don't know when I first became conscious of it. At another time I might have sensed it immediately, as I had once before, but this time I was too confused by an overlay of emotion. And this was true for Jean too. The new emotion was too similar to our own for us to know it as different.

I felt a great sadness come over me. It became an effort to let my breath out. I had been talking less and less and Jean's responses had stopped. She seemed to be listening, but not to me, and in the darkness I would see her head turn to me as if she was waiting for me to say something I never said. Then suddenly it was too much.

"Let's go back," I said quietly.

"All right." She took another cigarette, waited for my match and blew smoke out. I lit my own cigarette but it didn't catch. I stopped, struck another match, and heard her walking on ahead. She had walked out of range of the match-light, and when I blew it out, the contrasting dark was something almost tangible. I could not see her but I heard her heels on the walk. The next moment I could not hear her anymore.

"Wait a minute, Jean," I called.

There was no answer.

"Jean!" I called, raising my voice. "Jean, where are you?"

ALL I heard was the wind blowing through the tall weeds. My throat went dry. I hurried ahead as well as I could in the darkness and a few feet farther on I stopped. There was an intersection there, where three ramps joined before continuing on into the yards. I realized I'd never been in this part of the yards before. We had evidently wandered farther than I'd thought. I struck a match and called her name again and felt queer and frightened. Why didn't she answer? She couldn't possibly have gotten beyond range of my voice. There was no way of knowing which of the three ramps she had taken. There was no way, I realized suddenly, for me to choose among the three myself. I was lost.

Lost? It seemed a foolish thought. Perhaps I was lost, but what did it matter there? But it did matter. Somehow it mattered terribly. The fear in me had grown suddenly and unaccountably. I turned around and tried to get a glimpse of reflected light that might guide me to the houseboat or the offices, but no light penetrated that vast darkness. I cried her name out again and again, and finally I took the ramp that led to my right, where I thought it might lead to the houseboat.

And then I heard that sound again, that tragic sigh that seemed to issue from the earth and the sky itself, a deep, soft sound that filled my mind. I almost cried then. Something heavy and oppressive had taken hold of me. I felt that I never wanted to move again, or to make a sound, or do anything but wait there to hear that voice again. That was the first time I thought of it as a voice. But I ran on, stumbling in the dark, falling off the ramp several times, coming to new intersections and choosing blindly among them.

Little by little panic closed in on me. The mountainous heaps of metal enveloped me, hanging over the ramps at high, weird angles until I knew that they were moving slowly, readying themselves to break apart and tumble down and overwhelm the ramps and me. . . .

I see I have written I *knew* they were moving slowly. I cannot remember that night so distinctly anymore. There was a time when I believed I had *known*, but now I am not sure anymore. It seems to me that I could not have known, but only thought so. I never found out which was true. I remember only the great, unreasoning fear that drove me through the darkness, and the way everything came alive, the damp boards under my feet, the tangled growths on all sides, the hills of metal, the swamp and the

things in it, the sky itself. There was life everywhere, ugly and malignant, reaching, grasping, and somehow filled with an ineffable sadness.

And finally it was that sadness that quieted me and made me think that nothing mattered anymore. That was how Jim and the others found me.

I laughed, I recall. I realized I had been calling Jean's name over and over in a high, strained voice. They had heard us at the houseboat almost immediately—we hadn't been far off at all—and Jim had gotten lanterns and led Dave Reed and Black into the yards. They found Jean quickly and then followed the sound of my voice as I went deeper and deeper into the swamp. And then I saw the lanterns ahead and there they were and I was laughing.

WE RETURNED to the houseboat and the impromptu party went on. We had finished the wine and returned to the rum, and the music kept hammering away, and the talk was lively and interesting and full of laughter. But it wasn't the same for me, nor for Jean. I watched her dance with him and there was a languor about her that should long before have washed away by what she drank. She had always been gay and talkative when she drank, but that night she was quiet, and her half open eyes seemed wondering and thoughtful and, I thought, troubled.

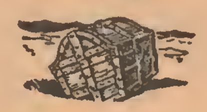
It was all unreal by then, except for two things. One, that Jean and I were drinking heavily and neither of us showed it, and two, the way Jim looked at me some time later.

I was sitting near the phonograph, changing the records, and he walked over during a short lull in the music. "How's it coming, Elly?" he asked.

"Fine," I said, "fine." I put on a new record and looked up at him. He was studying me. He was on the point of saying something when Rollie Bester came over and complained that the music was too fast for her lazy husband. Jim took her arm and led her back to Al Bester and delivered a lecture on slow and fast beats and how to dance to them.

That was as close as we got to talking about it that night. We left a little after eleven and Jim took us through the yards to the outer gates. Walking across the ramps in a body, with lanterns and loud talking, it was hard to remember even then how it had been a few hours before. But later, alone at home, I remembered. Slowly, the idea of the Thing was forming in my mind.

I couldn't sleep.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF MAUDE WILLIAMS, STATE'S WITNESS, ON DIRECT EXAMINATION BY DISTRICT ATTORNEY MALCOLM O'DAY)

Q. Then you're not certain of the date of that Sunday in July?

A. No, I don't hardly pay much attention to dates, except with men, I mean gentlemen. I mean what's the difference, one day being the same as any other. I mean it doesn't—

Q. Pardon me for interrupting, Miss Williams. You're not certain of the date but you do remember that afternoon and evening distinctly?

A. I'll say I do. That was the Sunday Jules, I mean Mr. Black, took me out to that dump. I mean, it was really a dump, a place where you dump things.

Q. And you remember everything that happened that afternoon and evening?

A. Well, almost everything. I mean, the way everyone was drinking and all and getting stinking, I was so lonely, I mean I felt so neglected by Mr. Black that I finally drank a little myself, but I'm sure I remember everything important.

Q. And what do you mean by important, Miss Williams?

A. I mean the way Mr. Hammond acted. We're talking about Mr. Hammond, ain't we? I guess it's important when one gentleman steals another gentleman's girl, at least it's important to the gentleman.

Q. How would you describe Mr. Hammond's actions?

A. I would say that he was acting terribly upset and all, very jealous, you could see it on his face. He didn't take his eyes off Mr. Shilling and Jean, I mean Miss Lowell. Then Mr. Shilling and Miss Lowell disappeared and all the time they were gone Mr. Hammond, he just buried himself in the victrola, playing one noisy record after another. Then they came back and Mr. Hammond got into a terrible argument with Mr. Shilling and—

Q. What was the argument about?

A. Well, on the surface it was about some crazy musician and how good he was, but you know very well, I mean, people, grown-up people and all, don't argue that way about musicians. I knew it was really about Mr. Shilling taking away Miss Lowell. It was a terrible argument, and the names they called each other, I mean a lady just could not listen to such terrible language.

Q. And then what happened?

A. Then Mr. Hammond gave up the argument and he got Miss Lowell to go away with him for a walk. They were gone for more than half an hour and then we heard Mr. Hammond calling Miss Lowell's name, as if she had run away from him. I mean he said he lost her while they were walking together, but how could he lose her so he would have to call for her, and she didn't answer him once. Well, everyone heard him and Mr. Shilling and Mr. Reed and Mr. Black got lanterns and drunk as they were they went into the dump and found them both.

Q. Was that all, Miss Williams?

A. No, it wasn't. When they came back, Mr. Hammond was laughing in a kind of crazy, upset way, and after that he quieted down and he and Miss Lowell were both very quiet for the rest of the evening and hardly said a word to anyone. But Mr. Shilling kept looking at both of them in a very worried way.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF JULES BLACK, DEFENSE WITNESS, ON DIRECT EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY CHARLES WELLS)

Q. Would you say that Mr. Hammond drank excessively that day?

A. No one drank excessively except Miss Williams, who always drinks excessively. She passed out in our taxi on the way home. The rest of us had a few mild rum drinks and wine that couldn't get a fly drunk.

Q. Did you notice any evidences of jealousy on Mr. Hammond's part?

A. As a matter of fact, it wasn't until Reed told me the next day that Hammond had been seeing Miss Lowell for a long time that I even suspected he had any great interest in her. He didn't know she was missing till she had been gone half an hour, and it didn't worry him at all, as far as I could see,

and at least I was sober.

Q. Was there an argument between Mr. Shilling and Mr. Hammond?

A. The argument—that's a foolish word; it was a debate. Anyway, it was between Reed and myself, and Shilling joined in, and then Hammond had his say. There are some people who get passionate when they debate things like Django Rheinhardt's virtuosity. I won't talk to people who have an uncomplimentary word to say about Joe Marsala, for instance—he plays the clarinet. As for the names we called each other, my friends and I habitually use rather robust language, as opposed to the unfunny filth that dribbles from Miss Williams' melon-shaped mouth.

MR. O'DAY. Your Honor, I object to the witness' continued attacks on the character and reputation of Miss Williams.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. Your objection is well taken, Mr. O'Day. The witness will refrain from further derogatory remarks about Miss Williams.

Q. Mr. Black, do you remember what happened in the yards after you heard Mr. Hammond calling Miss Lowell's name?

A. Yes. Shilling jumped up and said, "They're lost. Elly doesn't know his way through that maze.' Then we got lanterns and went in and found them. They weren't far apart, but the place was so dark you couldn't see a foot in front of your nose. Hammond laughed about it because he felt foolish, I suppose.

Q. Did you notice anything unusual in Mr. Hammond's behavior afterward?

A. No, and I was conscious all the way home.



November 4, 1943

IT KEPT running through my mind. I would be sitting at my desk, writing up some squib and somebody would bring in containers of coffee and I would stop working to drink the coffee and there it would be. I didn't know what, exactly, but it was there . . . the idea.

I would see the ghost crabs lying in the hot mud. I would remember my voice calling Jean and the stillness when she didn't answer. She had told me later that she hadn't heard me. She had taken one of the turns and stopped to wait for me. She had seen a match light up far away and go out, and after that she didn't hear or see me again, and she had remained where she stood until Jim found her.

I would be going downtown in a cab and I would get out to pay the driver, and the coins in my hand would move, and I would see the ghastly, dead whiteness of the huge claw the crabs dragged after them. I would see the mud as I had never seen it . . . cooling all night until it was quite cold, and all the things that lived in it were buried underneath, so that the moon looked down on a wet and barren world.

Whatever it was, it was always with me. It was in the store windows when I stopped to look at something, it was lying flat and alive in the folds of a newspaper I opened, it was in the ordinary words addressed to me in the course of ordinary events.

November 5, 1943

ONE morning I looked at the face I was shaving and it startled me. It was haggard and melancholy and deep rings were forming under the eyes. It was the face of a man who wasn't well.

Later that day I saw another face like it. It was three or four days after that Sunday, and Jim phoned me at the

paper. He was coming into town for the day and wanted to have lunch with me. When I saw the way he looked I was careful about what I spoke. He let me get halfway through lunch telling him what I was doing on my assignment before he said what I knew he had been waiting to say.

"You've been thinking about it, haven't you, Elliot?"

"Yes."

I knew he had his hands clasped under the table. He leaned forward, but at the last moment his eyes avoided mine. "What do you think?"

"I don't know," I said. "I . . ." My mouth had gone dry and the food was tasteless and hard to swallow. I pushed the plate away. "I don't know," I said again, very quietly.

Presently Jim said, "I'm seeing Jean tonight. You know, don't you?"

"Yes, I know."

"You don't mind?"

I shook my head. "I saw her last night. She's in love with you, so that's it. I'm glad it was someone I like. I'd like to keep seeing her, and someone else might not understand."

He tried not to look or act sorry for me, but because I knew he did feel sorry, it didn't work and I was annoyed. He looked at me and I saw he understood. But that wasn't what he had come to talk about and we both knew it. "Have you spoken to her about it?" he asked.

"No."

"You avoided it?"

I was silent a moment, then I said, "I think she's forgotten it. Not just forgotten—it's as if it never happened. I don't think she would know what I was talking about if I mentioned it."

"Yes," he said. "Yes . . ." and that was all.

We sat there while the waiter brought coffee. I tried to drink it and couldn't. I felt my face grow hot and my hands were moving by themselves. I pressed my palms down on the table heavily. "Jim, what is it?" I said. "Tell me, *what is it?*"

He put his cup down. His voice was barely audible. "I'm not sure. I wasn't afraid of it at first, but now I'm not sure." He seemed to have difficulty in raising his eyes to mine. "I've been alone a lot these past years. I thought maybe it was something in my mind. And then, last week . . ." He didn't finish, and after a few seconds he said, "I don't know what it is. There's no use talking about it. Sometimes I think I'm losing my mind."

FROM the way he looked at me I realized I must have been staring at him. There was a meaning in our meaningless conversation, but for a moment I had listened to it with a strange objectivity, and it sounded insane. What could we possibly have been talking about? And then the red-and-white-checkered tablecloth became alive, and the white squares shrank and moved and arranged themselves to form claws, and it had a meaning again, even if we didn't know it.

"I can't see Jean tonight," he said. "Will you go home with me instead?" He looked at me earnestly. "I think maybe you'll be able to . . . to know for yourself."

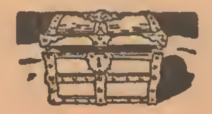
"No, you'd better see Jean. We can meet later and I'll go with you." I was talking without volition, as if I was reading a part written for me, doing something I somehow had to do without wanting to do it, I felt that recurring sensation again, a sort of numbness, of being far away and listening to a voice I couldn't quite place. "She's been looking forward to tonight," I said. "I think it'll be good for her—for both of you," I added, but not

quickly enough. I let it stand and didn't say anything else.

But when I saw him late that night I wondered if it had been a good thing for them. Jim had come to the bar where I was to meet him an hour before our appointment. We didn't talk much on the subway, but we weren't paying attention to the papers we had bought. I wondered if Jim had been that way with Jean, and what she had thought of it if he had. He kept glancing up from his paper to stare vacantly down the car. Once he absent-mindedly lit a cigarette, and when I told him to put it out, he looked at the cigarette as if he had never seen it before. But all in all I don't think I behaved much better.

At the last stop we took a trolley. It was close to midnight when we got off and started walking the long block to the yard office. The night was hot, with no breeze, and the stillness was emphasized by the occasional night sounds of crickets from the empty lots on all sides.

Once Jim slowed down and asked, "You're sure you want to come?" but I didn't answer and he didn't ask me again and we kept walking. At the gate he stopped to say something to two of the night watchmen. They were old men, suffering from the heat, sitting with their shirts off and drinking warm beer from bottles Jim pretended not to notice. He took two lanterns, turned the wicks up, gave me one and led the way into the yards. When he gave me my lantern I saw his face clearly in the light. The droplets of perspiration had disappeared and his face looked as cold as the hand I felt when I took the lantern.



(TEXT OF A LETTER FROM ALFRED BESTER TO DAVID V. REED, OFFERED IN EVIDENCE BY THE STATE AND ACCEPTED AS EXHIBIT 12-A)

405 East 54th Street
New York City
July 23, 1941

Dear Dave:

Can't get in touch with you since you had your phone disconnected for the afternoons and aren't home evenings, so I must trust the U.S. mails to get through to you in your Brooklyn hideout and tender this loving dinner invite. We are having spare ribs and, naturally, Julie has been invited to be boss of the sauce. Are you getting much work done these days? Matter of fact, I am thinking of having my phone undergo the same operation—every time I get set to do a paragraph, the damn thing goes off.

By the way, I saw your friend Shilling—or is he Elly's friend? All confused—with Elly yesterday at the 47th Street Steuben's. They were stuck off in the back and I wanted to sit with them, but I had another look at them and decided they weren't getting along well. Looked to me like they were having a bitter but dignified argument. Wouldn't be what Julie says, would it? He says you told him that Jean tomato is Elly's girl. Rollie says if so, she was, because she's Shilling's now. We are all waiting for the gossip with our tongues hanging out. Best from

Bester

P.S. The invite is for Friday night. Phone yes or no.



(TEXT OF A LETTER FROM DAVID V. REED TO ELLIOT HAMMOND, MAILED TOGETHER WITH EXHIBIT 12-A, OFFERED IN EVIDENCE BY THE STATE AS EXHIBIT 12-B)

August 3, 1941

Dear Elly:

What's going on these days? Not only haven't I heard from you but I

can't seem to get you. It's understandable in my special case, but where the hell are you? I call your office and they tell me you're on a special assignment operating on your own. All I know is what I hear, and what I hear should burn you up. I am enclosing Al Bester's recent letter to me as a case in point—brother, they're all talking about you and Jean, and nothing I or anyone else who knows you can say will stop them. On top of that I meet Jean — two days ago in George's — and she says she is very worried about you and you look like hell and if I am your friend why don't I help you. In what way? Will you call me Tuesday night? I'll be in, waiting.

Dave



November 6, 1943

THERE is too much interference here. All day I wanted to write and couldn't because my diary was missing. I think I know why. But now I am too tired to begin.



(TEXT OF A LETTER FROM JOHN BROOME TO DAVID V. REED, NOVEMBER 9, 1943)

Tuesday

Dear Dave:

This letter is a little late and I can't write much because we're pretty busy now getting the barns ready for winter—and there's no need, really, because you're coming up for the weekend. You must be through with your work because you worked this past weekend; I deduced that from the fact that your phone was out both times I called you Sunday, to save me the trouble of this note. Anyway, I dropped in on Hammond Saturday. (Incidentally, you're wrong about his place being near us—they're paving 16 and the detour is almost forty miles!

Well, I didn't get to see him at all, mainly because of old Schumer. But I did get a look at that diary Schumer wrote you about. The old boy filched it before Elly was up (he gets up about noon, I hear) and showed it to me. He is copying it without Elly's knowing, and it is terrific. I don't quite know how to tell you about it here so I won't try, but you have something in store for you. Meanwhile, don't get worried. The diary is really well written and up to Elly's best, as I recall it.

The one disturbing thing, to my mind, is Schumer taking that diary. If Elly is working on it as hard as Schumer says, wouldn't he miss it? Wouldn't he kick up a row if he found out? How much do you trust Schumer anyway, or is that a fool question? That's all now. Regards and love from my wife.

John

P.S. Almost forgot. Schumer seemed terribly disappointed about your not bringing the box with you, but I explained without giving him any too much hope that you'll get it. He said: "Vhen you write Mr. Reed, remind him that ve the box are vaiting for most angsiously.'' Pandora couldn't have said it with more feeling.



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

THIS note was written three days after Hammond's Nov. 6th entry, which clearly indicated Hammond's awareness of what John Broome mentions, i.e., the disappearance of his diary.—D.V.R.



November 7, 1943

I CAN see us walking through the yards as if I am high overhead. Two tiny yellow balls of light move slowly through the dark. From the pale nucleii of these lights a softer, larger and undefined circle of light is formed. To its main direction is added a slight wavering movement from side to side. The light is marred by our two figures and our single, joined shadow, and as the light moves, the shadow follows

and glides over the wooden ramps. Momentarily it obscures the dimly revealed mountains of metal that make each ramp appear to be the bottom of a deep gorge.

There is no sound until I come down, then I hear the even tread of footsteps on wood. Then I hear myself breathing. I am fighting for breath. I look at myself and remember fear. I have stopped walking. I listen and begin to tremble, and suddenly I am not afraid. *"Jim!"* I whisper, though I know he cannot hear me. He is standing beside me. His hand is tight on my arm and then it relaxes. It occurs to me that he was never afraid, except for me. . . .

"Listen to it, Jim," I said. "What a wonderful sound."

He nodded and we stood there. The sound had welled up all around us. It was different from the way it had been the other times, but the voice was the same. The sadness was gone from it, though it was gentle, and it was filled with a reflective joy, with an indomitable vigor. It could not have been heard ten feet from where we stood, yet while it lasted it filled the world. And then it was gone, and Jim turned to me and nodded again and we went on.

And somehow our whole mood had been altered. It was as if someone had met us with mysterious but nonetheless magnificent news. I say *as if*, but that was exactly what it was, and when we had gotten to Jim's house and were sitting out on the deck, he began to tell me about it in his own way.

". . . and there was no voice in the beginning, nothing audible, that is. Sitting here like this or walking the beach or falling asleep, it was like a soliloquy. The disease is endemic with people who've been alone for awhile. For lack of someone to talk to, you create fictional counterparts of yourself, and you embody these fractional personalities in opinions and unintegrated thoughts and contradictory notions.

"Little by little all your activities are shaped in these inner dialogues—sometimes you even speak aloud. You wake up and look at the clock and say, 'Well, how about getting out of bed?' and then you say, 'Shut up and let me sleep.' Or you ask yourself, 'Are you going to keep spending six bucks a week on rum or buy a pair of shoes?' and you answer, 'Rum, naturally,' and then you say, 'And go barefoot?' and you make peace by promising, 'Next week,' but you say, 'Say positively,' and you groan and say, 'All right, positively.'

"Finally, not everything, but a large part of what you think becomes soliloquized, vocal or not, and it cheers your daily existence, especially if you're a contradictory sort of person, and most beautifully if you have any gift for fiction. You know?"

Yes, I knew. I nodded because I didn't want my voice to intrude. The awning was rolled back and the sky was filled with stars and the sea-smell was clean and strong. Jim sprawled in a wicker chair, heels perpendicular to the deck, more at ease and more charming than I had seen him since the old days. Looking at him then, watching his eloquent little gestures, enjoying his inflections and phrasing, it was easy to see what Jean and other girls had seen in him.

STILL, there was something else in his manner, something at once expectant and negligent. He was making conversation while waiting for someone or something. It was as if he were expecting a lovely girl, say, and telling me little things about her while we waited, but knowing that what he said was unimportant because presently

she herself would arrive and I would see for myself.

He continued: "And so it goes from day to day until you're quite used to it. But then, suppose a day arrives when you're startled by something you've thought?"

"By what you *yourself* have thought?"

"Then you see what I mean," he nodded. "One might hear or see or read something that would father a thought capable of startling one, but that isn't one's *own* thought. Only fools and mystics believe in a separate existence of the mind. Can I be startled by a thought which is really my own? Not any more than I can be surprised, say, by finding a book on my shelf which never was there—"

"Unless someone put the book there," I said.

"Or put the thought there," Jim agreed, "which is saying the same thing."

I stirred uneasily. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that one day I began to feel that there was a definite reality to some of the fictional counterparts I had created." He looked at me and smiled. "I don't mean it in a foolish or mystical way; if I did I wouldn't be far removed from the classic schizophrenics and their split personalities. But I did feel I was occasionally really arguing with an intelligence that wasn't mine. . . ."

He waited for me to speak. I lit a cigarette, exhaled, and said: "I don't see the difference, Jim."

"It's simple enough. You have a choice—either I was insane, or there really was an outside intelligence. If I was insane, there was no use pursuing the matter any further. An insane man can find anything he needs to substantiate his beliefs."

"And a sane man?"

"Looks for some objective proof."

"Still," I said, cautiously, "an insane man can call anything objective. He is insane because he believes in the objective existence of his visions and voices. He points to thin air and instructs you to see his phantasm—the fact that you don't see it is only evidence of *your* failure, and doesn't shake his belief at all."

Jim drew his legs up, put his hands on his knees and leaned forward. "So eventually we come to the definition of objective. Suppose we take the usual definition—that which is perceptible to others is objective."

"All right."

"Then this voice we *both* heard is an objective fact?"

I said slowly, "I'm not ready to call it a *voice*," hesitated, and said, "I mean, I'm not ready to accept my own *feelings*—"

"But then you're destroying the definition," he interrupted with a patient shrug. "If you don't accept your feelings and I don't accept mine, and a third and a fourth person do not accept theirs, where do we find an instrument capable of verifying objectivity?"

A *feeling* is something subjective," I said.

"Even if a hundred people share the identical feeling?"

"How do they know it's identical?"

HE LEANED back again and sighed. "For that matter, how do we know we see or hear identical things? It's a hoary chestnut, that one. Even if we both reproduce what we see by painting it, or what we hear by playing it on a piano, the inherent error is always still possible in the reproduction."

"True, but we make a kind of logical compromise because we act on an assumed sameness, on a point of refer-

ence. At worst we are saying that things equal to the same thing are equal to each other."

He seemed resigned to my objections. "All right, we'll say that objectivity is something capable of being perceived by the five senses. It must be able to be touched, or heard, or seen, or smelled or tasted." He clasped his hands and was thoughtful a moment, then he said, "It doesn't matter. All I wanted to say originally was that I believed in the objectivity of a thing *before* it was open to the reference of any of my five senses. But it doesn't matter because it did later become verifiable to at least one of those senses."

"A thing?" I asked.

"With a capital *T*," he said. "A *Thing*."

"All right."

"I thought you felt it yourself the first day you were here."

"With a capital *I?* You mean I felt *It?*"

"Yes."

I hesitated. "I don't know. I felt something," I said.

"Something not verifiable by your senses?"

"Yes."

"And then you heard the sound?"

"Yes."

"And you connected the sound with It—with the Thing?"

"Yes."

"With still no proof?"

"With no proof."

"And tonight you heard a *new* sound but again you connected it?"

"Yes."

"Without proof?"

"Yes," I said, very quietly.

He kept looking at me. "Then you believe in the existence of something none of your senses could verify?"

"I heard the sound. I verified that."

He shook his head. "No, it's not the same. You believed in It before you heard Its sound. You believed in something and then you heard a sound and you connected that sound with the Thing you believed in, and then you heard another sound and again you connected that sound with the Thing. But you believed in It before you heard the sound."

"You're wrong in one thing," I said. "Whatever I believed in or thought I believed, now that I re-examine it, I realize I cannot believe in it."

"Unless you're insane?"

"Unless I'm insane."

"Or—unless there was something to believe in, and a different way in which to arrive at that belief?"

"A way apart from the five senses? What other way?"

"Put it this way: you have a shelf of books and one day you find a new book there. Since you're a sane man, you conclude someone put that book there. Right?" When I nodded, he went on. "You have your own mind and you're aware of its capabilities; one day you find a new thought there. As a sane man you must conclude—"

"Not at all. I disagree with the image. I might know my shelf of books, a simple matter, but knowing the capabilities of my mind is an entirely different thing. None of us really knows that."

"True enough," Jim said, still patient, "but suppose you thought of something that you were positive was *not* your own thought?"

"That's where I can't follow you."

"Suppose I'm talking to you over the telephone. I ask to meet you for lunch. You agree and ask where we'll meet. I tell you of a place you never heard of, tell you where it is and describe it. It is now a thought of yours, but was it originally? Wasn't it *put* into your mind?"

"It was communicated to me."

"You believe in this place and its existence," Jim went on, "but your senses have never verified it."

"But you told me about it."

"Suppose then that you thought of this place without my telling you about it?"

"But how could I?"

"Never mind how. What if you found such a thought in your mind? What would you think?"

"That I had forgotten who told me about it, or when I had seen it or been there or heard about it. Unless I could remember where the thought came from, I could only think that it had been communicated to me at some time by some one."

HE SETTLED back again and seemed satisfied. "We keep coming back to the word communication," he said, "and that's what I mean, basically. We differ in only one thing—what we mean by communication. You think of it as something verifiable, something heard or read or seen. . . ."

"And you, Jim?"

He smiled a slow, humorless smile. "I think there is a different kind of communication, a way of having a thought put into one's mind."

I swallowed. "No, I said. "Not in any way I know," and then I added, "Not by anything I know or ever heard of."

"You've answered me," Jim said softly. "I went through all this in my mind. I asked myself all these questions and got the same answers. And that was why I thought I might not be quite sane—*because I felt a kind of communication.* I couldn't verify it, but I believed in it. I felt I was no longer soliloquizing, but was debating with an active intelligence. It wasn't an intelligence open to usual cognition, but it was there.

"It wasn't always there, but from time to time it made itself felt. I couldn't always understand it, but often I did. And then, after awhile, it was no longer in my mind alone, but there were sounds too. And even then, though I believed it, I couldn't be sure if it wasn't a progressive development of insanity—one can imagine sounds as well as a communication of thought.

"But there were other things. Others here have heard the sounds. You might then say that I had taken perfectly explicable sounds and lent them my own meanings, but that wasn't all. The sounds had the same effect on others as they had on me. Was I imagining this too? It was possible. It was too new a thing to know about, you see. When you came here for the first time it was barely a conscious thought with me. But since then . . ."

He stopped speaking and that same attitude of listening came over him. It seemed to me there was nothing to hear, not even the wind nor the sea. The hot, still night was unchanged . . . and then, slowly, I became aware of something . . . I didn't know quite what. Something had charged the air and the heat and the silence, and everything I'd said rose up within me to confound me.

I was not the sober voice of reason I'd taken the pains to be during our long discussion. Why had I denied feeling the things I'd felt? Why had I avoided mentioning the *idea* of what he called the Thing, which had grown in me in a way very like his description of what he called communication?

I heard myself asking quietly: "And since then, Jim?"

He appeared to rouse himself, but he was still listening. "It started as something I didn't know I knew—then I knew it—then I heard it. And then,"

he hesitated, "I spoke to it."

"You spoke to what?"

"Listen."

I thought at first that I was thinking the words, for they were words I dimly remembered, and at first there was no sound that I could hear. And then I heard that same voice rise in the still air and fill the world again.

Just take a trifling handful, O philosopher!
Of magic matter; give it a slight toss over
The ambient ether—and I don't see why
You shouldn't make a sky.

THE voice was gone and I opened my eyes and saw Jim standing at my side and the vestiges of the first surge of fear died away. He touched my arm and I got up and followed him across the deck to stand at the sea rail and both of us knew that we had gone there because there was a reason, even if it wasn't our reason.

I don't know how long we stood there. I don't know how to measure the kind of time, or timelessness, that existed for us. There was only the nightbound sea and the nightbound wind, and the dark tide running swiftly. Over and over I heard the muffled bell from a buoy whose little red light was hardly visible, pitching to and fro. And all that time this voice spoke to us.

Spoke? Yes, it spoke. Or did it sing? Or was it a threnody played by massed instruments and chanted by a great chorus? I know only that there was such sound as I had never heard before and was never to hear again, except from the Thing. There were words too, of course, often vaguely familiar and whispered, but much of the sound was exanimate and meaningless and filled with an unutterable intensity. Toward the end it became a gentle ululation that finally died away and left us alone.

By then we knew. We didn't know what it was, but we knew the Thing was alive. That was it, you see. That was the miracle—*it was alive . . . alive!*

I remember the last words it spoke that night that I understood.

Praised be the fathomless universe
For life and joy
And for objects and knowledge curious

November 8, 1943

SOMETIMES, these past days, as I cast back into memory and for a little while live those old days again, I try to remember what I thought then. I don't mean specifically—it isn't easy to forget a specific reaction to a specific event if it was an event of any memorability. I mean, as well as I can put it, the all-over mental reaction, the series of reactions, the continuous process and the result of the process. But am I making myself clear?

One might compare it to a physical shock. When such a thing happens once, or twice, it isn't hard to remember the reaction. But what happens when the shocks continue, when one follows another before the reaction to any of them has had a chance to end? Do not the reactions themselves change as a result of their frequency?

I can remember what I thought as one event followed another with increasing swiftness, but I thought them with a mind fashioned by the events. And that mind, that quality of it, nothing can summon up again. Nothing remains of it but the faulty remembrance of something transfigured. It becomes useless to examine what one did long ago when one was a different person, and useless to try to understand.

The terror was there from the beginning. The instinctive reactions were identical. There was terror, but it was not enough. There were too many other things. There was the blinding power of the realization itself, and the helplessness before it, and the hypnotic fascination of the future, and all these things ended in a sort of *ekstasis,* a mental segnitude from which there was no release until it was too late.

But what could I have thought?

I take the thought now and turn it over and over and look at it with a mind that has had a chance to recover from that awful impact. How does it look now? How does it sound?

There was a living Thing there in the yards. It was alive but utterly unlike anything that had ever lived before. It was a new form of life. It was, according to its own words, a form of metal life. It had come into being of itself, with an awareness of itself, and an understanding of its position in a world of another form of life.

How does it sound?

WHAT did it look like? It doesn't matter what it looked like—we ourselves never really saw it, though we saw part of it or what we thought was part of it. How did it live? From what source did it draw its nourishment? We never found out. We never learned how many of the life processes were necessary to it, or of how many it was capable—not of our kind of life. It was its own life, with its own laws, with its own vast capabilities. It could speak and move and see and hear, and it could think, and these things and others where it crossed the streams of ordinary life made it seem less strange then. But even then we knew it was something utterly alien . . . a Thing.

And why not? From where had life come? There once was a sun that spun in space and there was a mild upheaval and fragments broke off from that sun and flew off to spin in orbits around it. And one of them, not the largest or the smallest or particularly marked, cooled off and formed land and sea. The sun beat down on it and from this warmth and from the random mingling of meaningless elements a new element was made, a thing called life.

Was there an exclusive magic to this performance? Was there any reason to believe no such thing could ever happen again, perhaps in an entirely different way?

There was still the immutable sea and the land and the sun, and the elements haphazardly brought together from the ends of the earth and piled together. Why could a new form of life not . . .

The thing was, we knew it had happened. That is what I mean by trying to recapture the quality of mind. I can sit here now and think and ask questions and answer them, and reason one way and another from now until I die, without coming closer to the essential truth—that we knew, and that it happened. Nothing else is necessary to understand it. The Thing itself said it best when it quoted:

Life and the Universe show spontaneity

So, once you came to accept its being, you asked questions about it. But you only knew a few of the things it could do, and most of them you could not understand without first seeing it —all except one thing: you knew it could think. Knowing that made it possible to question the way it thought and what it thought of. And not only was that the one thing we ever learned much about, but the one thing that mattered. The fault was ours for not understanding it in time.

FROM the beginning, I think, I felt its mind was unhealthy. I remember the days that followed and the interminable discussions I had with Jim about it. I came there immediately from work, haggard from lack of sleep, badly shaven, hungry, but my brain filled with new questions, reeling from the impact of what I knew, and driven by a strange energy. Mostly it resolved itself into the question of what we should do about what we knew. It seemed obvious to me.

"No," Jim said. "I don't want to tell anyone yet, and don't keep asking why. I want to know more about it. I want to think about it. I want to get used to the idea of it before I tell anyone."

"And not because it doesn't want you to tell?"

"That's also a consideration."

"It didn't want you to tell me."

"That was different. I didn't . . . didn't understand," he said and made futile motions with his hands. "I wasn't sure about it until the night it spoke to you."

"You're changing your story," I said. "You were sure about it. What you weren't sure about was its attitude toward others. You were afraid of it *after* you accepted it."

"What are you driving at?"

"That you've no right to decide not to be afraid of it—that we must not keep this Thing a secret—"

"What are you afraid of?" he demanded. "Of its strangeness? Of the magnitude—"

"I'm tired, *tired* of that word magnitude."

Jim looked at me and smiled thinly. "It's the thought of the magnitude you're tired of. It's too big for you. Think of it, Elly, think of what we know!"

It did no good to burst out: "All right, *we know!*"

Jim wasn't listening. He walked away, lost in thought, his eyes intensely bright, and he didn't come back to where I sat until we felt the atmosphere vibrating with the peculiar sort of charge that told us the Thing was coming.

It was just past eight, that memorable evening of which I write, and there was still a little light far out on the horizon, a thin line of silver separating the similar blues of sky and sea. This was the third time it was to speak to us, and we both started to go to the sea end of the houseboat, as we had done the previous times. I think I mentioned that we went there from some compulsion.

This night it was different, and so we came to understand clearly why we had gone to the sea rail before. For this time the Thing stopped us.

Come out on the pier away from the water.

We heard the Thing's voice tell us that, but we had known it before it spoke. It was as if the Thing had transmitted the thought first and then quickly remembered to voice it. Jim and I exchanged glances that told us we had both thought the same thing, but even at the instant of the exchange Jim's attitude altered, as if he had dismissed the consequences of the thought immediately.

Quietly we went back and climbed the small gangplank to the pier and walked toward the land end. I don't know how Jim felt—I think he tried to hide his feelings at the beginning—but with me it was always the same. The moment I would sense the change in atmosphere it became an almost conscious effort to breathe. I could feel my skin tightening and a sort of numb-

ing coldness come over me. I hardly ever moved, and the few words I said were broken syllables wrenched from my lips.

And this night, because of what I had been thinking, it was worse than ever. . . .

November 9, 1943

I WENT to Reed and tried to tell him about it. I told him about the Thing saying *Come out on the pier away from the water* and that I had not only known the thought in advance but had begun to act on it before the words were spoken. I told him, as I had told Jim, that I was convinced the Thing was capable of exerting a compulsory power. Reed said, "Very good, very good," and laughed and added it to the notes he made.

I kept trying to



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

THE fragmentary Nov. 9th entry is the first violation of the chronological order of the events of which Hammond wrote. In the diary this entry was crossed out in pencil and the Nov. 10th entry resumed from where the one for the 8th ended. It is included here in its original order not only because of the intent not to alter the diary in any way, but also because it is the first indication of Hammond's failing strength and the chaotic end he feared from the start. The Nov. 10th entry is also a fragment, but in part I have been able to reconstruct the missing sections from the conversation I had with him during the period of which he writes. My notes and inserts following the Nov. 10th entry deal with this in what must remain a poor substitute for Hammond's writing.—D.V.R.



November 10, 1943

WE STOOD in the gathering dark close to the pier. I could barely make out the nearby ridge, and behind it the sprawling immensities of metal were lost. There was not a sound. Then I heard a slight, dull noise, as if two heavy bars of lead had been brought together. I turned my head to the right and heard it again, closer this time.

Then halfway between us and the ridge there was a light. It flew straight up to the sky and vanished. When I looked down again there was a second tiny pinpoint of light, and this one didn't go out. It seemed to separate and then there were two points close together, then a third, then a fourth, then all closed and formed a minute line, and the line kept growing, curling around and around. It stopped in a few seconds. It looked like a very small, very fine filament through which a current was passing, making the filament a hot, coppery pink that glowed steadily. In form—it was now perhaps two inches long—it resembled a tightly-wound spring, but of such infinite delicacy that it might have been a coiled strand from a spiderweb. The very heat with which it glowed, obscuring its form, seemed to be destroying it.

And then the voice, deep and serene.



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

HAMMOND didn't phone, as I'd suggested to him in my letter of August 3rd. Instead, two days later, just as I was sitting down to dinner, he appeared at my home. I have this date established because I used a sheet from a calendar memo pad to scribble down a few notes I made that evening.

I was surprised to see him and a little



The light flew straight up into the sky and vanished

startled, at first, by the way he looked. His eyes, usually bland and humorous, seemed quite small and bloodshot, and there was the same weariness in them and the movements of his slender body. Indeed, it seemed to me that he had shrunken in the clinically exemplar way of a man with a cancer. And his unannounced appearance was strange; I live so far out in Brooklyn that no one travels there on the chance of finding me in. But after an emergency consultation with the cook, I invited him to dinner, and we sat down for a Martini or two while we waited.

By the time dinner was ready I was changing my mind, and when it was over I hardly remembered my first impression. The drinks seemed to subdue the overly alert reactions he made even to slight sounds, such as a plate being set down by an annoyed cook, and he ate well and listened to my small talk. As I recall, it was mainly concerned with the differences in our work. I was halfway through a long story later published under the title, "The Lost World," and I told him about it. It was based, as some faithful reader may remember, on the idea of a planet which had wandered out of the solar system and returned thousands of years later. He listened to my theories and blood-curdling ideas for their development with unusually strong interest, and from this almost professional attention I derived the suspicion that he was thinking of turning his hand to some such work. So I asked him.

"No, Reed," he said slowly. "What I'm thinking about is what you, or somebody like you—someone who works with ideas—unusual ideas—would do if you found yourself in a situation like the ones you write about."

He was smiling a little and I smiled back, thinking of the odd emphasis he had used on the word "situation," as if it was totally unsatisfactory to what he meant. "For instance," I said, "we go out for a walk and when we come back, this house is gone."

"Yes," he nodded, pleased. "Just gone, like that!"

"And there's an empty lot in its place," I went on, "and when I go to the police—I suppose I'd go to the police?—and tell them, they think I'm crazy. They go with me and when I point out the lot, they tell me that there never was a house there." I paused and said, "I'm beginning to like it. They shoo me off and I go next door to my neighbor and ring the bell. Who answers? Is it my old neighbor or a total stranger? He doesn't know me, at any rate, never saw me before. The same thing happens with the other neighbors—with the stationary store on the corner, with the counterman at the dinner. No one knows me, no one ever saw me before. I go to the police again. I look sane, so they listen for a little while. It turns out there is no record of my birth at Borough Hall, no school records, nothing—"

"Nothing," said Hammond, "except one friend who remembers you and substantiates the whole story."

I considered and shook my head. "That's no good," I said. "Complicates the story too much. One man might be thought crazy, but two men telling the same story—"

"But I went for a walk with you," he said, "so I knew. No, don't rule that out. If you rule it out, what is there to reassure you that *you're* not crazy? You see, the whole thing is so . . . so strange . . . this situation, that you need someone like this friend."

"Maybe," I agreed partially. "It's promising, all right. Maybe I'll use it if I can develop it."

"All right, then, develop it. What would you do?"

"CAN'T say, offhand," I said, thinking about it. "I'd probably end up in the amnesia ward at Bellevue and get my picture in the papers—"

"That's not what I mean. Now you're writing it, and you can control the story. What I mean is what do you do *now*—living the story. What do you do now that you find yourself actually *living* that story?" He was leaning forward in his deep chair with an odd intentness, but perhaps my surprise at his seriousness was what relaxed him again. "I mean," he said, "what does a person do in such a situation when he is someone used to dealing with fantastic events?"

"I'll be damned if I know," I said stupidly. "I don't see that he's any the better off than Joe Blow, the stolid citizen from Kokomo."

"Or Elliot Hammond," Hammond said.

"Or anybody. You think there's a spe-

cial skill that fantasy writers have with . . . with . . . r e a l l y fantastic events? That's like expecting Ellery Queen's creator to solve a real mystery. Queen happens to be written by a team of which Manfred Lee is a fraternity brother of mine. I remember once when Alpha Lambda Phi ran a beer party and some of the older fraters like Lee showed up in the Brown Building down at the Square. He put his coat-check in one of his pockets and couldn't find it. But give him the idea of a misplaced coat-check and Ellery Queen might be off on one of his most baffling adventures."

He nodded and smiled weakly at me and lit a cigarette. "I'll tell you a story," he said. But he sat there for another minute without speaking, and then he took out a handkerchief and mopped his forehead. "It's warm in here," he said. "Let's take a walk around the block and I'll tell you the story."

So we went for a walk and he told me, briefly, without flourishes, without a fraction of the impact I was more than two years later to receive reading it in his diary, the beginning of the story. The point is, I listened to it as a story. And, as a story, I liked a good deal of what I heard as we walked. I thought I saw the point of our previous discussion, for he was building his story from ordinary events, from seemingly undramatic elements like Shilling's houseboat in the swamps. But as he went on speaking of the yards, repeating over and over some mystic reference to ghost crabs, detailing his conversations with Shilling when they met and later on, I couldn't help my critical impatience. And then, the way he took the little incident where he and Jean had been lost for a few minutes and twisted it to suit his story, and something in his voice as he described it, brought back that old uneasiness I'd felt when he first arrived that evening.

But again it passed; we had returned to my house. "Well," I smiled, "the house is still here," and he grinned as we went in. By then he was telling me of the days that followed that first night in the yards, and of his meeting with Shilling in Steuben's. He was smoking as he sat on the couch, telling me how the Thing's voice sounded. He closed his eyes and quoted: *"Just take a trifling handful, O philosopher . . ."*

"Good," I said. "I like that. Elly, you're going to write this, aren't you? You're serious about it?"

HE opened his eyes and regarded me. "I'm serious about it, Dave," he said, "but it's not a story."

"Not yet, maybe," I said, "but it's good, so far."

"All right, Dave, but I'm not going to write it."

"But why not? You've worked on it, I can see that."

He sighed, still looking at me carefully, then he said, "I don't know how it ends. It's not complete."

"The hell with that," I said. "It'll write itself, with a little thought and patience." I took the calendar pad from my desk and a pen and made a few brief notes on what he'd told me so far. "How much more have you got?" I asked, looking up.

He was staring at me and his features were drawn, his eyes bright. But after a moment he said, "I've worked out how this thing came to be. I think of it as a *thing* with a capital T. It's alive, you see." He took a deep drag and added, "Only it's a new kind of life, the only Thing of its kind in the universe. And it explained itself to us by saying: *"Life and the Universe show spontaneity. . . ."*

"It sounds very learned," I said. "How does it come by these quotes?"

"Quotes?" he asked.

"You're not going to try to pass them off as your own," I grinned. "I can't give you the whole quotations but I do know that that's the second quote from poems by Mortimer Collins, nineteenth century."

"And the one that goes: *"Praised be the fathomless universe. . . ?"*

I couldn't figure him out. "That one's a good deal less obscure," I said. "That's Whitman. I was an English major. I remember more useless quotations than Lee Rogow. That's from Whitman's *'Memories of President Lincoln'.*"

He was silent for a long moment, then he said, "It isn't hard to explain. The Thing itself has told us it has read every one of Jim's books, and he has a great many. It answers Jim's questions—"

"What kind of questions?"

"It seems to know a lot about our kind of life, and Jim asks it how. It tells us about the books. *'The seasoned life of man preserved and stored up in books,'* it says."

He exhaled smoke and asked, "Is that a quote?"

"Are you kidding?" I asked, mystified. "That's from Milton, either his *'Tetrachordon'* or *'Areopagitica,'* I'm not sure which."

"I didn't know, Dave," he said. His face was covered with a film of perspiration, though the night was relatively cool. The way he sounded and looked, I thought he was ill. "You see, the Thing told us these things and Jim either didn't know they were quotations or didn't tell me he knew. There are a lot of things I think Jim knows that he doesn't tell me."

That was the way he had been speaking all night. One minute he was in the story and the next he was talking about things that might have been happening to him, and sometimes I couldn't tell which was which. And then I would remember our talking about living a story, and I would decide that was what he was doing.

"AND then, one night, it let us see part of it," he went on. "We were waiting for it and it made us come to it. The other times it made us go to the sea end of the pier. It didn't tell us to, but we did it each time without even talking about it. But that night it was different, and before I could even think about why I was going to the land end I was already going. A second later, a hundredth of a second later—just long enough for the thought to occur, it actually said, *'Come out on the pier away from the water.'* That made me realize that it had some kind of control over our actions, and not only that, but it didn't want us to know that it did."

"Why?"

"I don't know. All I know is that it's so. Sometimes I think that's why Jim doesn't want to tell anyone about it—because the Thing doesn't want us to."

"All right," I said, "so neither of you ever tell anyone about it."

"But I'm telling you," he said.

"In the story you don't tell anyone. If you do, it wrecks that good idea of its hypnotical dominance. You want to tell, but something stops you. Every time you want to tell someone, some strange power stops you." He didn't say anything and I made some more notes while I waited, then I asked, "What does it look like?"

His eyes were closed and his voice lower. "We only saw a part of it. It had been hiding in the swamp for a long, long time. First it became aware of its own existence, then gradually it realized not only what it was but the unique place it occupied in the world in which it found itself. And for a long time it lay in the swamp and it became a lonely, melancholy thing. And then Jim came to live near it and it would see him every day. In its own fashion, in a way I can't begin to understand, it had amazing intelligence, abilities . . . powers. . . ."

He stopped so long that I prodded him. "What kind of abilities and powers?"

"I don't know them all. I know it thinks, but not in any way that you or I can possibly . . ." and he paused again. "It lay there a long time, and then it learned to move a little, but it didn't because it didn't want to be seen. Then maybe it learned to hide itself—"

"To make itself invisible," I said, writing it down.

"Yes," he nodded, waiting, and when I looked up again and he raised his eyes to mine I thought there was a sort of helpless fury in them. But that didn't make sense. "Yes," he said quietly, "it made itself visible, if it ever was visible to human eyes. Or maybe what happened was that it was always invisible and then found that out, and then it had to learn to make itself seen. I don't know. But then it found it could communicate, and it did—"

I wanted to say: "It could exercise telepathy," but I merely made the note without interrupting.

"—It would communicate with Jim for a little every day, and sometimes at night. And I think it found a sympathetic and responsive mind in Jim. I think that was the great stroke of luck in what happened. I don't know what might have happened by now if Jim hadn't been there, or if he had been different from the sort of person he is. But little by little the Thing progressed, and then it could make sounds. The sounds I heard in the yards were the Thing's sounds. Why did it let me hear them ? I think because in the beginning it sensed, or it knew, that I felt much the same way Jim did, and that I was quite similar to Jim in many ways. Or maybe it thought that all humans were like Jim. . . ."

PRESENTLY he resumed, "I spent a lot of time with Jim. His place had a

strange fascination for me. I used to spend those early afternoons out on the beach or in the swamp or on the pier, watching the ants and the ghost crabs—"

"What about those ghost crabs?" I asked. "What's the particular meaning of that business?"

"I'm not sure," he said, and I saw him shiver. His bright eyes were fixed on me. I saw there was something definitely wrong with him. "But the Thing was not afraid, finally, to talk to me when I was with Jim, and then it decided to let us see it, or a part of it. And it did. It looked like a very small spring, the kind of spring you might find in a watch or a cigarette lighter. But I—"

I'd made a dissatisfied grimace and it stopped him. "It's not dramatic."

"But it is," he said, nodding, "even for you, even your way, it is. I think it's only a small part of it, because it was suspended in air, the way your eyes or your heart would look if they were the only things one could see of you. And it glowed as if it had been held under a flame that had made it red hot. But it didn't last long, and at first I thought the fire had destroyed it. Then I realized that it had let the fire die out because the experiment had failed. You see, it was an experiment. It wanted to see how a human would react to the sight of it.

"That was what it asked us, but it didn't have to ask, and it didn't believe Jim's answer. There it was, a bit of something glowing in the darkness, asking if we were frightened by what we saw of it. I couldn't speak. Even Jim could barely utter a word. He started to whisper that we weren't afraid, but the light went out. Then, for a minute or two, there was nothing but a vast silence . . . a silence that itself seemed to be alive. The experiment had failed. Presently we heard its sound once more, the sound I had first heard from it that seemed so mournful, and then it spoke. .

Think of this life; but for my single
self,
I had as lief not be as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself . . .

That was it, you see. It had anticipated the terror of its existence for human beings. Now it was learning that nothing it might do could overcome that terror."

"But why?" I asked.

"I don't know. I told you that there are things about it that I know without understanding how or why I know."

"That's not good enough," I frowned. "You can match that last quotation from '*Caesar*' with another: '*These things are beyond all use, and I do fear them . . .*' but it doesn't stand up. I've never liked the nameless terror angle—not convincing. Take the line from '*The Merchant of Venice*' that goes: '*Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time*' and combine it with one from '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*' that says: '*A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.*' Why shouldn't that be the more logical reaction of an intelligent man? Why fear a thing for its strangeness alone? Why shouldn't it work out happily—for instance, you invite scientists and others there, and this fantastic Thing—we'll call it the Metal Monster—that's good, by the way—anyway, this Thing turns out to be a great force for good."

"You think it might?" he asked.

"I think it should."

"That's what Jim seems to think, as much as I can tell." He was thoughtful a moment. "But why doesn't it want us to tell others about it? And why did it end that night by asking us to bring more people to the yards without telling them about it?"

"All right," I offered, "the answer's in what you said a few minutes ago. It thought all humans were like Jim, then it found out you weren't, and then it wants to see more, to study them."

"And what might happen when it finds out that most people aren't like Jim at all, that they react to it as I do—that there is something about it that is horrible? That nothing it can do will change that? I tell you there's something about it that is essentially, completely antagonistic to human life, and that the Thing itself is beginning to understand that!"

THE vehemence with which he spoke confounded me. He sat there staring at me, his face pale and covered with sweat. I decided to put an end to the discussion as soon as I could. "That's a small matter," I said as I got up. "The thing's in

your hands, to write any way you like. You can change that part. Have it happen—"

He leaped to his feet and cried out sharply: "Don't you understand? My God, don't you understand? I'm not talking about a story! I'm not inventing this! It's true, every word of it—*every word!*" He stood there, his arms straight at his sides, his hands open and pressed hard against his thighs. A vein in his forehead stood out in a line from the disordered tangle of his hair to his wide, overbright eyes. "Listen to me, Dave!" he said, fighting to regain calmness. "That's why I came to you. I thought you . . ."

Then slowly, very slowly, the tension began to leave him. His whole body trembled. He sank down on the couch with his hands limp in his lap and the tears rolled down his cheeks. He sobbed quietly for a minute or two, and once he tried to speak. "There's Jean too," he whispered in a broken voice. "It's done something to her . . . I don't know what . . . and I'm afraid, terribly afraid. . . ."

I waited until I thought it was all right to talk to him. "I didn't know, Elly," I said. I sat down beside him. "I want to be honest with you. I'm prepared to talk this thing out or do anything you want me to do, but just to satisfy me, I want you to let me call a friend of mine, a doctor—"

He shook his head. "No. I can't tell anyone else. You don't know how difficult it was for me to tell you. I had to stay away from there for a few days. I'll be afraid to go back, even though I must go back. The Thing may know I've told you. I can't tell anyone else. I mustn't. . . ."

"I don't intend to have you tell him. I just want him to give you a quick once-over. Don't look at me that way. I mean you're too worked up over this thing. You need something to quiet you down. Maybe you're sick—"

"You don't believe a word I've—"

"I do believe you, but that doesn't mean you can't be sick. Maybe if you were in better health you'd see this whole thing differently—the way Jim sees it, for example. Will you let me call him?"

When he made no answer I got up and crossed the room to the phone. I dialed at random and got the jammed buzz for no number and spoke into the phone. "Hello, is the doctor in? . . . David Reed. . . ." I waited, then said: "Hello, Mort? . . . Yes; can you come here right away? . . . Oh, I see . . . Yes . . . No bother; I'll be right down . . . Okay." I replaced the receiver and went back to Hammond. "He's put his car away for the night," I said. "I agreed to drive over and bring him in mine. It won't take fifteen minutes. You'll wait, won't you, Elly?"

He looked at me and nodded and I left. I drove the few blocks to the doctor's house in three or four minutes. He was home, as he usually is, being a specialist with regular hours at an uptown office. I outlined the story to him in the car, using up the full fifteen minutes. When we got to my house, Elly was gone.

On the bottom of the sheet with my notes he had written: *Sorry I bothered you. I felt much better after you left and decided to go home. I'll be at the office in the morning. Give me a buzz. Many thanks. Elliot.*

THAT was that. The doctor stayed awhile and I reconstructed the story in detail from my notes and we talked about it. He didn't agree with me that Elliot should be confined for observation, as I had more or less planned when I went to get Mort.

Mort said: "I'd say no, on several counts. First, the very act of confining him might produce a severe psychological shock, especially since you say he's a person of considerable sensitivity. From what you've told me it seems plain enough that he's on the verge of what is loosely called a nervous breakdown, but only on the verge. What might happen to him if he were put under observation for two weeks, say? What about such things as his job? What about the effect on his reputation?"

"What if he gets worse?"

"What do you mean by worse?" Complete hallucinations? Violence?"

"Violence."

"I'd say the chances are against it. Assuming, as it seems to be, that this upheaval is the result of his losing the girl he loves, what does it show? Certainly no evidence of violence, either committed or impending. He's not the man for violence. He's been in love with this girl for years, and then the first time she meets this other man, he watches her fall in love with him almost instantaneously. In his mind he begins to placate his outraged feelings; he connects

that phenomenon with another that justifies it. He invents this weird creature and credits it with powers of compulsion. On the surface he tells his story so that it appears he is afraid of this compulsion partly for himself and partly for some generalized concept of humanity.

"Only when he's pressed does it come out that he also believes it has affected this girl, too. It's simple enough then: his subconscious, or one part of it, says to him, 'You didn't lose the girl to him—you lost her because of that creature, that monster.' He locates the habitat of this creature right next to his friend's home. He changes the nature of the unacknowledged conflict between him and his friend to one where his friend is more or less on the creature's side, sympathetic to it, and he implies that his friend knows a good deal about it that he, your friend, does not."

"BUT the story is so detailed, so fantastically elaborate," I objected.

"It has to be, for a man of high intelligence. The first one he has to convince is himself, and no ordinary story will do. It has to be something like what it is. And it's a well guarded story, too, for there's another part of his subconscious guarding it. That part knows the story mustn't be repeated, therefore he tells you that his friend doesn't want to tell others. The assumption is that if you should ask his friend and get the anticipated denial, you still theoretically wouldn't know whether it wasn't because his friend was covering up the truth—or even whether his friend wasn't under the same compulsion not to speak about it.

"But if he himself is under such a compulsion, how could he tell you about it? I don't know how he justifies it to himself, but he must have a subconscious loophole. He told you he had to stay away from there for a few days, implying that he thus weakened this creature's power over him, and he adds that even then it was very difficult for him to do it.

"Still, he had to have a reason for telling you at all. Why shouldn't this private justification be enough for him? For one, you've told him that his friends are gossiping about him. Now he realizes that his loss has a public aspect to it. It becomes necessary for him to try to justify it to others. You're a good friend of his, but more, you've become identified, in his mind, with all the people who are talking about him. If he can convince you, he satisfies himself that he has gotten at the others, or could have, had he told them the story.

"But remember this is guarded, subconscious reasoning. When you tell him you want to bring a doctor, he immediately raises his guard. As an instrument you're overstepping the bounds of the role to which he assigned you. His subconscious decides that he's failed to make you understand because you're too stupid or too unreceptive or some such thing—something your fault and not his. He does what he thinks is a clever thing and leaves you a note implying that he agrees with your unspoken diagnosis that something is wrong with him. Thus he keeps his story alive and away from possible challenges. Challenges are the one thing that he can't stand, precisely because there is a part of his subconscious that knows the truth of the matter.

"And that's where the hope lies. Had he consented to tell me the story, I'm afraid I'd be more inclined to agree with you. The typical breakdown case may be somewhat reluctant at times, but he tells his story to many, always in the hope that he will convince someone, and always because he can see no real reason not to tell what is the truth to him.

"In a large part, however, you have helped him. You've been the vessel into which he poured his disguised woes. The very fact that he spoke about it to a second person now gives him something of an objective way to look at the story; it's no longer in his mind alone. The telling was a fair catharsis in itself, and there's a good chance that from here in he'll begin to come out of it. There might even be a good deal more truth in his note than I think. In any case, I'd let matters alone for the time being. Don't tell anyone else and call him tomorrow. Be casual. Try to see him, but don't force your presence on him. He may be pretty well embarrassed by the whole thing. You agree?"

"You're the doctor," I said.—D. V. R.



(TEXT OF A LETTER FROM LEO-

POLD SCHUMER TO DAVID V. REED, NOVEMBER 10, 1943)

My dear Mr. Reed:

I must tell you I am puzzled that your friend, Mr. Broome, who was here Saturday, has not written to you, as he gave me his assurance. Otherwise, why should I receive your letter this morning? But perhaps it is that Mr. Broome is writing late?

I cannot here answer all your questions. Please sympathize with the hardship of dictating in English and the lack of time. Also, to do so is not half so good as for us to sit down and talk together for an hour or two, which I will be most glad to do.

The diary of which I wrote you makes progress. It goes unevenly, good one day, disappointing the next. But I am satisfied to see Mr. Hammond writing it, and I watch over his work most carefully, as you understand. It is too soon to estimate the value of the content, but the undertaking itself is important. I say frankly that I am very hopeful but one must be prepared for anything. I guard against the sudden impulse, always possible, which may cause him to destroy his work, by each day copying whatever he writes.

The most pronounced omission from the diary is the mention of the box. Neither in his talks with me has Mr. Hammond made any reference to it. This may be because he is aware, as I am quite sure now, that I read what he writes. Or it may be that it is of no consequence. With the other hand, I have the suspicion, the feeling, that it is perhaps a matter of great importance, after all, because of his memory of the address. But of these things we will talk.

The box, as you describe it, must be the one, a large wooden box covered with brown leather and gold figures and a small lock. I am most eager to see it, of course. The best thing would have been for you to send it here when you got it Saturday, but it is now too late to save time if you are coming this Friday. But no more delays, please, I request of you, as it is my intention to let him know you are coming with it. With most excellent regards, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Leopold Schumer



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

I found the box described in Leopold Schumer's first letter after two days of ransacking a warehouse filled with antique furniture, china, lamps, books, paintings, and the odds and ends of an eccentric old man's collections of thirty years. I got it, after urgent pleading and explanations, for ten dollars. It was rotting and the gold tooling almost obliterated, the lock filled with sand. It was the only box of a great many that fitted the description.—D. V. R.



November 11, 1943

SCHUMER says this temporary illness will pass. Even I speak of it now as a temporary illness, though I know what it is and I wonder how much time there is. Not much, I think. For two days I have hardly been able to move and I haven't written more than a few lines. And yesterday, for the first time since I began to feel better, I imagined I saw those ghost crabs again.

I say *imagined* just as I say *temporary.* Even suggestibility can become a habit. Schumer has been telling me for so long that it is my imagination that even in the privacy of my thoughts I use his words, unsuitable, often untruthful, though they are.

Yesterday was warm and I expected a long day of writing. I sat on the sun porch, composing my thoughts, reviewing my work and planning its most difficult phases, now arriving. I found I could think even of the deaths with some detachment. Full and vivid in their horror, still they took their places in my memory without occasioning a single lapse.

The great problem remains the reproduction of our conversations with the Thing. They remain words on pa-

per, lacking the dimensions of majesty and terror. Understanding why this must be is little help to me at this point. Twice now I have attempted to write of the Thing in some detail and have had to give it up altogether, yet without it there can be little



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

FROM what Hammond writes two paragraphs later, it appears that he was aware of some of his lapses and *non sequiturs*—indeed, several have been enclosed in penciled brackets for editing by him at a later date. However, it does seem likely that he did not realize their frequency completely, for some are repeated again and again. Even when it is realized that this entry and the one following were written over many hours, with many halts and chaotic resumptions, there is some evidence for the belief that his words were a form of self-hypnosis, and though he denies it as often as he admits it, that the lapses were intimately connected with this hypnosis.—D. V. R.



Yesterday I stopped because I looked up for a moment and my gaze fell on the rock garden outside. One of the groups of plants is surrounded by heaps of large, oval white pebbles. The instant I looked at them they became hard, translucent balls of flesh and then changed until I saw in them the stony claws of the ghost crabs. The circle is drawing tighter, closing itself.

Schumer says Dave Reed is coming either tomorrow night or Saturday, and in preparation I will remain in my room and write. Whatever does not come easily will wait, yesterday's note included. Even if I believed in it, which I do not. If not, then why write all this? The compulsion is still there. Have I come so close that I must say I do not believe to keep going?

There was no sleep the night we first saw part of the Thing. Jim and I were up till dawn talking about it. We discussed our disagreement, neither of us certain of what we intended doing, yet somehow feeling we had made our decisions. We were exploring our own minds, trying to find these decisions. When I left him, I knew I wasn't coming back for a few days. I wanted to think about it alone.

There was trouble at the paper. The old man had a talk with me when I came in to deliver some of the stuff I'd done. He said they'd been checking my facts and found serious mistakes, and my writing was off, lacked interest and so on. He offered to take me off the assignment and suggested I take my vacation earlier than I'd scheduled. I refused; my work was the one thing I needed to occupy my mind. So for two days I worked like a demon and at night, exhausted as I was, I took sleeping pills and locked myself into nightmares.

Then one morning I got up and knew what I had decided. I was going to tell someone the story. Dave Reed had written me a note asking me to call him, but I'd been too busy to remember. There was some nonsense enclosed about people gossiping about Jean and I, and that was what decided me, I think. Reed wasn't the best kind of person to entrust with secrets, but he was easy-going and level-headed, and not the sort to be bewildered by something like what I intended to tell him. Or so I thought.

It was a mistake from the start. I remember what I went through before

I summoned the strength to go to his home, and the way it fell apart in my hands, and the memory has not lost any of its bitter taste. All day I fought to sustain my decision. There was something almost tangible that kept trying to stop me. Even when I was on the train on the way there, I got off once and started back, and then changed again and continued on. I had phoned him during the afternoon and found his phone disconnected, as usual. But I didn't call him in the evening, when I knew very well the phone would be working. And I understood the workings of my mind there. I wouldn't call when I knew he might answer because I still couldn't commit myself. The moment before I rang his bell I felt an almost irresistible impulse to turn away and leave; the moment after I rang I prayed he wouldn't be home. When I spoke to him I skirted the edges of what I had come there to tell him, and when I finally told him, it was in the guise of a story for his mill.

I wonder what he might have said had I told him directly, with no pretense or discussion. As it was he sat and made notes and offered changes, and everything he said fell into the familiar pattern of the things he usually wrote. He had a label for everything. He even had a name for the Thing. "We'll call it the metal monster," he said once, in great satisfaction. And when I finally told him that every word I'd said was the truth, he was stunned. It was too much for him, after all.

REMEMBERING it now, I wonder if it wouldn't have been too much for anyone. It wasn't for Maria or for Kathy Gray, as it wasn't for others, but then, they *knew*. It was different, knowing. Still, there was a moment when I thought he believed me, when I thought I hadn't made a mistake coming to him. And then he went to get a doctor—he thought I was sick, he said.

I left before he got back. I added a note to his own, telling him I felt better, hoping the matter would end there. Later I found out that he called me several times at my office the next two days, and I suppose he called me at home too. He didn't get me because something happened to me.

When I got home that night I found Maria Denisov waiting for me. She had talked the superintendent into letting her into my apartment. I knew Maria and her sister, Tamara, through the Besters. Rollie Bester, who was a radio actress, had appeared in a sketch written by Tamara and they had become good friends. There was a time, months before, when a group of us had gone away for a week-end in the mountains, the Lincoln's birthday week-end, I think. It had rained a lot and we'd stayed indoors drinking around the fireplace, and one thing with another, Maria and I'd had a short romance. Not that one had to drink to become infatuated with Maria—the failing was mine. That first night she danced on a table—she was one of the finest dancers in the ballet theatre—and jumped down into my arms, and I didn't let go. Not until the long week-end was over, and then, well, we understood and stayed good friends. I suppose she thought of Jean and I . . . but I'll try to explain.

I should explain, I suppose. This part of my life seemed to be very important when they

What is there to say in explanation? How is one to explain what was itself a mystery for so long? I can only say

And then, perhaps the details? It should be understood.

I was so glad to see her. . . .

We hadn't met in months and I didn't

know why she had come and it didn't matter. When I stopped in the doorway, surprised to find the lights on, the sound of the door opening brought her from the kitchen. She was holding a brandy inhalor glass half filled with Scotch and she put it down on a table as she came hurrying to me.

I closed the door and she stood before me, holding both my hands in hers, looking at me. There was concern under her smile and she shook her head. Softly she said, "Elly, they told me and I didn't believe them, but you do look bad." And then, when I didn't say anything, her smile vanished and she whispered, "Hello, Elly."

"Hello, Maria," I said.

It didn't come to me, not at all, not until the next morning. She was too much for me in so many ways, in the mysterious ways of her mind and in her beauty. In her child's eyes, dark as jewels, there was a bewildering synthesis of innocence and worldliness. Her long, jet-black hair formed a braided tiara for her, and her high, delicate cheekbones and the soft lines of her lips made you think of illustrations you hadn't seen since you were very young, when you read about princesses and knights and the dream world where all things came true. She was someone you had seen many times since, but you never remembered—you never thought of closing your eyes and trying to capture your memory, so you never knew she was who she was when you were near her—because a dream is hard to remember, and, essentially, she was a dream, at least for me.

Oh, I don't say I thought of these things then. The nearest I ever came to realizing them was the next morning —the nearest before it was too late.

WE SAT and talked and after awhile I began to forget the terror that had been with me for so long. She was a wonderful talker. Her slight changes of expression, an often superb gesture, the way she would phrase things, were touched with a rare artistry. She told me of some of the people she had recently met at the Besters—their home was a parade ground for endless specimens; *types,* Maria called them, the mis-matched and unmatched and unmatchables—with saucy poutings and eloquent shoulders, with here an inflection recalled exactly and here the hip movement of a fruity actor. It was nice to laugh again.

Late that night we walked along the riverfront until we found a bar near Battery Park and we drank the old drinks, the drinks we had had that week-end long ago—egg-nog and hot toddy in August. When we walked home I felt better than I had in weeks, and the next morning I began to understand how much in love with her I was.

We rose early and drove to Connecticut and then went back to the place in the country where we had been together for the first time. It was crowded with summer visitors but we didn't care. Our two day



(TEXT OF A LETTER FROM ELLIOT HAMMOND TO DAVID V. REED, OFFERED IN EVIDENCE BY THE DEFENSE AND ACCEPTED AS EXHIBIT 19.)

August 7, 1941

Dear Dave:

I hardly know how to tell you the wonderful news. Maria has been writing letters for the past hour and I realized that if I waited, I would be scooped on my own story. The news is that Maria and I were married in Greenwich, Connecticut, yesterday. The

familiar postmark on the envelope should tell you the rest: we are honeymooning here. I haven't told the office yet (as you may know if you've called me there) and I don't know when I will, because I don't know how long we'll stay.

I wanted you to know from me not only because I, in your place, would be irritated learning it second hand, but for your recent kindness, and, possibly, your peace of mind. I am happier than I have been in all my life. Maria just asked me whom I was writing and when I told her, she asked me to send you her best regards, to which I add mine.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF DAVID V. REED, DEFENSE WITNESS, ON CROSS EXAMINATION BY DISTRICT ATTORNEY MALCOLM O'DAY)

Q. Mr. Reed, how long have you known Elliot Hammond?

A. Quite a long time, off and on. We went to school together and met in our junior year. That would be six years ago.

Q. I see. Did you also know James Shilling as a student?

A. Only casually—enough to nod to.

Q. And how well did you know Mr. Ham—I'll change that. Mr. Reed, would you say that you were a close friend of Mr. Hammond's?

A. What do you mean by close?

Q. I don't think there's any mystery attached to the word "close." I am asking a question directed at determining the relationship between Mr. Hammond and yourself. Were you one of his confidants? Was your friendship close enough for him to single you out as the recipient of his confidences? Would you consider yourself his best friend?

A. Which of those questions do you want me to answer?

Q. I would be greatly obliged if you would answer all of them, in the sense that your answer would give us a picture of your relationship. I am trying to arrive at some idea of your relationship.

A. We have always been good friends. I wouldn't say I was Mr. Hammond's best friend, nor—

Q. Excuse me. Were you one of his best friends?

A. I'm sorry, Mr. O'Day, I don't know how to answer that question. I don't think I ever weighed any of my friendships in quite—

Q. Mr. Reed, I do not want to engage in a battle of diction. I want you to forget for a moment, if you can, that you are a writer. I want you to consider my words unprofessionally. There is no need for us to be spending all this time on such a simple matter. I am asking a simple question.

A. Will you ask me the simple question again, please?

Q. I'll put it this way, Mr. Reed. We have here a letter from Mr. Hammond to you in which he tells you of his marriage. We also know that he did not— I'll change that. There is no evidence to prove that he wrote anyone else of his marriage. Now, what I want to know is this: was your friendship with Mr. Hammond of such a nature that it justified his telling you alone of his marriage?

A. Mr. Hammond evidently thought so. I suppose it was for him to decide.

Q. You were not surprised when you learned that he had told only you?

A. He knew very well—he says so in this letter—that Mrs. Hammond was writing a lot of other people, so it was unnecessary for him—

Q. Were you surprised, Mr. Reed?

A. Nothing Mr. Hammond could have done those days would have surprised—

Q. Were you surprised, Mr. Reed?.

A. No.

Q. It did not occur to you that he had singled you out as the one recipient of this news because he had planned something that made it important—

MR. WELLS: Your Honor, I must object to Mr. O'Day's method of imputing motives by means of his leading questions. He might as well ask if Mr. Reed—

MR. JUSTICE REVERE: Sustained. Mr. O'Day, the State has an obligation to establish its case through evidence, not through so-called questions purely designed to tell the jury something. You see what I mean, don't you? Never mind; just continue.



Have I made it clear? Sometimes when I think of those two days, those happy, happy days, it seems to me that all my life had been shaped toward reaching them. There were so many chances for them never to have happened, and even the way they came about was so fraught with the possibility of them never happening, that I began to think something was terribly wrong. I don't know what it is in the human mind that makes only unhappiness real. I was living in a dream that had come true, and because I began to know it, I became afraid again.

But it may not have been that alone, for fear feeds on fear, and buried within me—buried close to the surface in a hurried, shallow grave and imperfectly covered by my happiness—there was still the fear of what I knew and could not forget. It took a vagrant, unimportant thing to prove it.

On the afternoon of our second day away, Maria and I sat in the living room, the room where she had danced that night long before. She was writing her sister and others of our marriage. We were in no hurry to let people know—I hadn't even thought of it. Then I realized I ought perhaps do the same. I took over the table near the clean-swept fireplace and began. I decided to get the less important letters out of the way first, not that any of the letters presented special problems, but in the nature of such things there is always a division. Certainly I wanted to write longer and more thoughtful, more personal, letters to Jim and Jean and Tamara than I did to Reed or the Besters and others. So I wrote the first one to Reed. I remember it because of the associations it began, and what followed.

I had barely sealed the brief note when my glance fell to the red clay pavement that surrounded the hearth. A shaft of sunlight slanted through the blinds to form a yellow spotlight on the stone. Two ants came struggling into the light. They were carrying a bit of leaf. I watched them carry their burden across the clay, and the envelope I still held became intolerably heavy. In that instant I remembered everything. Everything I had said to Reed seemed to be inside the envelope. I saw the ants that were slowly destroying the pier where Jim lived, and the pavement melted under the sunlight and became thick, viscious mud the color of dried blood.

It bubbled and burst slowly and out of its depths rose the disintegrating fragments of bits of things I couldn't identify until I thought about them. Then I knew they were chips of metal

woven together with minute scraps of living tissue. I knew that there was no granule, no crumb of substance that was without the threat of life. . . .

The threat of life. . . .

I went outside. It wasn't until later, when Maria had finished her letters and came to find me, that she knew something was terribly wrong. I remember I was sitting at the edge of a pond not far from the house, staring at the mud.

I could hardly talk to her. More than anything I wanted to tell her, but I couldn't. It seemed to me that to tell her was to place her life within the scope of some danger, some monstrous and wicked danger, I had not yet fathomed. I could not tell her.

THAT evening we returned to the city.

We had looked forward to the first time when we would share my home as man and wife. We were to plan our future home together. There were things to be done, Maria's clothes and some of her belongings moved. Instead I sat at the window, drinking until my head reeled, afraid to speak to her because I might tell her if I started to speak. I couldn't know what she thought, but the anguish in her face was too strong for her to hide, and I finally ran out of the house.

I didn't intend going to see Jim at first. I didn't even know I was going until I found myself approaching the yards. I knew only that I was walking down a long, unlit street, and that when I stopped, I recognized the watchmen's shacks and the office buildings. One of the watchmen came to the gate and spoke to me, and whether it was because he had been drinking or whether my confusion made him uncertain, he didn't recognize me at first and I had trouble getting into the yards. But I got in. And almost immediately.

The way it happened, I couldn't be sure at first

There doesn't seem to be much use trying to go on. I don't know how long I have been sitting here, staring at this page. How long has it been dark? Just a few minutes ago, when I last looked, the afternoon had scarcely begun. I remember telling Schumer through the door that I wasn't hungry. I didn't want to go down to dinner. But when was this tray of food brought in? The food is quite cold; it has been here for hours. The house is so quiet.

I am too tired to continue. Perhaps after a few hours of sleep I will be able to try once

The moment I started across the yards I knew that something was happening there that night. It is impossible to sleep. The house is too quiet. I lie awake and wait for a sound. I cannot close my eyes because I am afraid of what I may see when I open them again. Is it at all possible that it is still alive? There is a kind of sound that is soundless, a sound that one hears only with one's mind. I hear that sound from far off now, as I heard it that night. I knew the Thing was with Jim. The gaunt, horrible metal skeletons watched me as I walked through the yards, and I had the sense of their passing the word of my coming down along the way I had to go. My head was aching terribly. I must have lost my way several times. When I heard the sea roaring along the shore, and I still hadn't found the familiar path that led to the pier, I didn't know which way to turn. I continued on until I reached the end of the yards and stepped down to the beach. There, as far as I could see, I found no light, no landmark to guide me. I must continue writing. There may be no time left soon. I know that the sound I seem to hear is only my imagination, that I

am making it come alive again by remembering that night. Schumer is right, of course. But if he is wrong? What if he is wrong? How familiar exhaustion is to me. It is the most beautiful drug in the world. My arms are too heavy to lift. I have long since lost all sense of the rest of my body. I am a disembodied brain directing a hand to write. Fatigue transforms this room. It lends the light from this lamp a hundred colors. The walls disappear. There is no longer a room. There is nothing. There is only my mind and what it remembers, and, barely visible, a hand with a pen in it, and pages of paper covered with irregular writing. This is the same fatigue I felt that night, the same utter exhaustion. I sank to the beach, unable to move. Then I heard the beginning of a scream. It lasted perhaps a fraction of an instant before it was cut off. I crawled back to the ridge and made my way in the direction from which I thought it had come. As soon as I reached the ridge I found the turnoff to the pier, and there, quite close, was the houseboat. Jim was there. I could see him standing on the deck from the light that came through the windows. The light inside must have been turned on a moment before, or I'd have seen it earlier, the first time I crossed the ridge. There was a girl standing close to him. She was in his arms and he was kissing her. She was crying very quietly and he was kissing her and talking to her. Then suddenly she wrenched herself free and I saw who she was.

Then I heard the Thing.

Come, lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely,
Arriving arriving. . . .

There was terror on her face. She staggered backward and then she began to run. Jim stood there and raised a hand after her and called out, "Don't, Kathy!" and then he covered his face with his hands, but by the time she had reached the pier he was looking again and he saw it happen. A little pink tongue of flame flashed to life in midair just before her. Then she was gone. The flame vanished. The sound of her footsteps stopped all at once and there was nothing else.

Later, after I heard Jim talking to the Thing, I began to understand. It was either that, or I was mad. But in the end I knew, and everything I did I had to do because I knew. I remember the way her body looked, lying mangled in the swamp, torn and broken and still warm when I found it. And the other things, the

Something gave me the strength to crawl back to the beach and I lay there and looked at the black heavens and the stars. I must have been there a long time. I thought about God. . . .

The night was half gone and the tide started to come in and the waves washed over me. I got up and went back to where her body lay, and I remembered the voice:

So softly death succeeded life in her,
She did but dream of heaven, and she was there.

I tried to tell Jean but she wouldn't listen.

Then I told Maria.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF JAMES MULVANEY, STATE'S WITNESS, ON DIRECT EXAMINATION BY DISTRICT

ATTORNEY MALCOLM O'DAY)

Q. Mr. Mulvaney, will you be so good as to tell the Court exactly what your position at the scrap depot entailed and how long you were employed in that position?

A. I'm still there. I been there, out on the bay, for three years now, since it was owned by the Acme Reclaiming people, the corporation, that is. I'm the head watchman. That means I'm in charge of four other watchmen, but I take split shifts, so's I'm there some part of the day and part of the night.

Q. And were you at the yards during the night of August 7th?

A. I was there all night. I used to sleep over in the summer if we were having a hot spell, it being so near the water and cool.

Q. Did you see Mr. Hammond that night?

A. I did.

Q. How many times?

A. Twice. Once when he came and once when he left.

Q. Will you tell us about both occasions in your own words, please?

A. Well, the first time was past eleven at night. I remember the time because it was strange, Mr. Hammond coming out there so late. I seen him coming down the street but I didn't have any idea it was him or any of Mr. Shilling's friends, not only because it was so late but because I seen this man was drunk. At least he walked as if he was. He came weaving down the street and I thought to myself—

MR. CHARLES WELLS. Your Honor, I object to the witness setting himself up as a judge of sobriety, and to his continued expressions of opinion.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. Sustained. The witness will confine his testimony to what he saw and heard. Proceed.

A. Well, Mr. Hammond came over to the gate and rattled it, so I went to see who it was. He told me he wanted to see Mr. Shilling. I knew who he was, of course, but I could smell the whiskey on his breath and I played dumb. You see, there was a guest of Mr. Shilling's out on the houseboat, a young lady—

Q. The young lady whose photograph you have identified as Miss Gray?

A. That's right. Anyway, I didn't have the right to keep out any of Mr. Shilling's friends, so I finally let him in. I saw him go as far as the main pass. He was walking pretty slow and he stumbled once or twice, even with the gate lights on. Then I went inside and rang up Mr. Shilling, but no one answered the phone. I knew he was there, but he didn't answer the phone, so there was nothing more I could do.

Q. When did you see Mr. Hammond again?

A. Just after three o'clock. I went inside the shack a minute to get my tobacco pouch and I heard footsteps on the walk. I looked out the window and I seen Mr. Hammond. He was half running, you might say. His hair was all down over his face and he was wet clear through, like he'd gone in swimming with all his clothes on. I could hear the water squishing in his shoes. He ran to the gate and that was the last I saw of him that night. I thought about trying to get Mr. Shilling on the phone but I looked at my watch and saw what time it was and I decided it could wait until morning.

Q. Had you left your chair near the gate at any time before that time you went for your pouch? Your post there, that is?

A. No, sir. That was the first time that night I went into the shack, or was away from the gate. Even then I could see it plain.

Q. Did you speak to Mr. Shilling the next day about this matter?

A. I did. I told him everything, just like I've said it here.

Q. What did Mr. Shilling say?

A. He didn't believe me. He got very upset about the whole thing and seemed to think I was lying for some reason. Then after a bit he calmed down and told me that as far as he knew, Mr. Hammond had left about midnight. He said Mr. Hammond had left with Miss Gray half an hour after he got there, and he didn't understand it.

Q. You saw Miss Gray arrive with Mr. Hammond, as you have previously testified. That is so, isn't it?

A. Yes. They came in about eight o'clock, just when I did.

Q. And you did not see Miss Gray leave?

A. No, sir, I did not.

Q. Could she have left without your seeing her?

A. No, sir. No one could get in or out that gate without my seeing it.

Q. So you never saw Miss Gray leave? You're positive of that?

A. Absolutely.



(*EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF JAMES MULVANEY, STATE'S WITNESS, ON CROSS EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY CHARLES WELLS*)

Q. Mr. Mulvaney, did you ever drink any intoxicating beverages while on duty at the gate?

A. Well, no, not intoxicating beverages.

Q. May I remind you, Mr. Mulvaney, that you are testifying under oath?

A. I don't consider beer an intoxicating beverage.

Q. Have you ever gotten drunk on beer?

A. Never.

Q. But you've heard of it happening?

A. Well, I've heard of it.

Q. Did you drink any beer on the night of August 7?

A. Yes.

Q. How much?

A. Some. A few bottles, I guess.

Q. Ten bottles?

A. Seven or eight. I'm not sure.

Q. Then it might be ten?

A. It's possible.

Q. Or twelve?

A. It's possible. I don't remember.

Q. But you do remember not being drunk?

A. I was most certainly not drunk.

Q. All right, Mr. Mulvaney. Now then, you smoke a pipe, do you not? I heard you mention that you went into the shack to get your pouch of tobacco. I take it then that you meant smoking tobacco?

A. That's right.

Q. Will you tell me how many times you went into that shack to get your tobacco? Just once? How many times?

A. Just that once. I don't smoke much. Maybe two or three pipefuls a day and then one before I turn in, to settle my stomach.

Q. Then that last pipeful was just before you went to sleep that night?

A. That's right.

Q. Mr. Mulvaney, you have testified that Miss Gray could not have left the yards that night without you seeing her leave. Now it turns out that you went to sleep shortly after three o'clock that night. Was it not possible for Miss Gray to have left the yards some time after you were asleep, without you seeing her?

A. Well, yes, but Mr. Shilling said she'd left about twelve and—

Q. Never mind that. Just answer yes or no. It was possible for Miss Gray to have left there after you were asleep?

A. Yes

Q. Then you don't really know whether she left or not?

A. That's right.

Q. But you're positive that Miss Gray did not leave the yards at any time before three o'clock?

A. I'm positive.

Q. After twelve bottles of beer?

A. I know what I seen and I know what I didn't see. I'm positive.

Q. That's fine. Thank you, Mr. Mulvaney, you're excused. With the Court's permission, I will now call to the stand Mr. Thomas Stapley as witness for the defense.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. Mr. Wells, is this witness intended, that is, are you summoning a witness to pursue this matter of Miss Gray's arrival and departure further? If that is the case, and I assume that is the case, I should like to point out that the defendant is not on trial for the murder of Miss Gray, or for any act committed against her person. It seems to me that the District Attorney has introduced an unfortunate circumstance in this case, in that the main charges are being forgotten, and this whole side episode has taken on much more importance than seems necessary. I should like— Did you want to say something, Mr. O'Day?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY O'DAY. Your Honor, the State has a definite purpose in pursuing this matter. This purpose will shortly be made evident. It is not a matter of a side episode but part of the entire case, or it would not have been introduced. We are well aware of the central bearing of this case, but what I have said is very true.

MR. WELLS. Your Honor, the District Attorney has spoken for me as well. The defense has no alternative but to pursue this matter further.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. Very well, call your witness, Mr. Wells.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF MR. THOMAS STAPLEY, DEFENSE WITNESS, ON DIRECT EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY CHARLES WELLS)

Q. Mr. Stapley, how long did you work as night watchman at the yards?

A. Almost a year. I started in October of '40 and was fired August.

Q. Why were you fired, Mr. Stapley?

A. On account of what happened in the yards and all. We had a lot of cops and detectives all over the place, you know, asking everyone a lot of questions, and it came out about the beer drinking and all and I got blamed for it. Somebody had to take the blame. The company was mad as blazes and I'd figured on quitting anyway for a defense job and I liked Mulvaney, he'd always been a good guy, so I said I was the one did the drinking. Said I did it on the sly.

Q. And did you do any drinking?

A. Not for the last six years, I didn't. I got ulcers. I can't.

Q. So on the night of August 7th, when you were on duty from seven in the evening until seven the next morning, you did not drink any beer or any other intoxicating beverages?

A. I should hope to tell you I didn't.

Q. Did you see Miss Gray that evening or the next morning?

A. Yes, I did. I saw her three times,

twice after midnight.

Q. Will you tell the Court of these three occasions?

A. The first time was when she came to the yards with Mr. Shilling. I was waiting at the gate for Mulvaney and they all came about the same time. Then, exactly two-thirty A.M., when I turned my time-key at the south end of my patrol, I saw Mr. Shilling walking with Miss Gray along the path that leads to the old pier. They both saw me and they waved to me and Miss Gray called out, "Good morning," and I said the same. The third time I saw her was around five A.M. I opened the gate for her and she thanked me and walked down the street to the end of the trolley line.

Q. Thank you. Your witness, Mr. O'Day.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF MR THOMAS STAPLEY, DEFENSE WITNESS, ON CROSS EXAMINATION BY DISTRICT ATTORNEY MALCOLM O'DAY)

Q. Mr. Stapley, how do you account for the fact that you did not offer the substance of your testimony to any of the police officers who you say asked you a lot of questions?

A. They asked a lot of questions, but none of them was about Miss Gray. They asked about Mr. Shilling and Mr. Hammond and Miss Lowell and others but they didn't ask about Miss Gray. I guess that was natural enough because they didn't even discover Miss Gray's body was in the yards until a couple of days after that other thing happened, so why should they ask about her?

Q. When were you fired from the yards?

A. Let's see. That night was the seventh. Then I was off two days and then I was sick with an attack of ulcers one day and the next day that other thing happened, and two days later I was fired. That was a Wednesday, I remember. I was sick on Sunday. That's right. It was the unlucky thirteenth, only lucky for me because I got a good job out west.

Q. You have been out west ever since, I take it? Where, may I ask?

A. With the Eureka Shipyards in Oregon.

Q. What made you come east to offer your testimony?

A. Mr. Wells had private detectives trace me. They asked me a lot of questions and then said that they wanted me to come east when the trial came up, so's I could be a witness.

Q. And your expenses, who is paying for that?

A. Mr. Wells paid for my round trip ticket and the hotel. I am losing money by not working, but I consider this a vacation and a good deed at the same time if I am helping anybody by telling what I know.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF MRS. MABEL BAILEY, STATE'S WITNESS, ON DIRECT EXAMINATION BY DISTRICT ATTORNEY MALCOLM O'DAY)

Q. Your address, Mrs. Bailey, is 224 Minetta Lane, is it not?

A. It is.

Q. And you are owner of the house at that address?

A. My brother, Mr. Stanley Bailey, and I are co-owners of 222 and 224, but he lives in Jersey and I live in 224.

Q. And Miss Jean Lowell was a tenant of your in 224?

A. She had apartment A-3 at the end of the hall, two doors from mine.

Q. Mrs. Bailey, you remember the morning of August 8th, that is, the early morning hours following the night of August 7th, do you not?

A. I do.

Q. Will you tell the Court why, Mrs. Bailey?

A. That was the night Mr. Hammond came hammering at Miss Lowell's door.

Q. Exactly what happened, Mrs. Bailey? From the beginning, please.

A. The first I knew was that someone was downstairs in the vestibule, ringing somebody's bell. That was what woke me. Most of the village people like loud bells for some reason, maybe because they're always having parties and make so much noise they're afraid they'll miss someone. Anyway, Miss Lowell's bell kept ringing and ringing, until finally the buzzer downstairs clicked. Then I heard someone coming up the stairs. I must have dozed off after that, because the next thing I remember is hearing a man's voice crying. He was saying the same thing: "For God's sake, Jean, let me in." Well, it wasn't any of my business except I heard Miss Lowell say "Please go home, Elliot," and she sounded frightened. And then she had to speak louder because this man was rattling her door. It was half past four in the morning according to my bedside clock, so I got out of bed and opened my door and peeped down the hall. I saw Mr. Hammond standing with his whole body pressed against Miss Lowell's door and he was turning his head from side to side. I thought he was sick from the way he looked. His clothes were all wet and there was a little pool of water around where he stood. He kept rattling the door and saying all kinds of things—

Q. Do you remember specifically any of the things he said?

A. Yes. He said he had to talk to her about Jim. Then he said he had seen Kathy Gray with Jim and something terrible had happened. He kept saying that he had to talk to her, over and over. Most of the time Miss Lowell didn't answer. Finally Mr. Hammond walked away. He leaned over the bannister and was sick, and he kept crying. Then he went downstairs and left. He was at Miss Lowell's door for about fifteen minutes.

Q. Thank you, Mrs. Bailey. Your witness, Mr. Wells.



(*EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF MRS. MABEL BAILEY, STATE'S WITNESS, ON CROSS EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY CHARLES WELLS*)

Q. You have testified it was four-thirty A.M. when you heard Mr. Hammond that night. You're positive of the time, aren't you?

A. Yes, I looked at my clock.

Q. And Mr. Hammond left at approximately four-forty-five A.M.?

A. Yes.

Q. That's all. Thank you.



(*EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF MISS TAMARA DENI-*

SOV, STATE'S WITNESS, ON DIRECT EXAMINATION BY DISTRICT ATTORNEY MALCOLM O'DAY)

Q. Miss Denisov, you say you visited your sister, Maria, on the night of August 7th. Was there any particular reason for this?

A. Yes, she telephoned me from Mr. Hammond's apartment and asked me to come. I didn't know that she had been married—I didn't receive her letter until the next day—but I had been worried about where she had been for two days. When she told me she had married Mr. Hammond, I came over immediately.

Q. Will you tell us exactly what happened between you?

A. I got there shortly after ten o'clock. I found my sister in tears, completely wretched and broken-hearted. She—

MR. CHARLES WELLS. Your Honor, I object to—

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. Sustained. Miss Denisov, you must not tell the jury anything except what you heard and saw.

MISS DENISOV. Your Honor, I saw that my sister was broken-hearted. She was crying her eyes out because of—

MR. O'DAY. Miss Denisov, I must ask you not to say anything that is a judgment, anything, that is, beyond a simple description of what you saw. Anything else will make your testimony inadmissable.

A. Very well. My sister kept crying. I asked her what the matter was. She told me she thought—

MR. CHARLES WELLS. Your Honor, I must object again.

MR. O'DAY. Miss Denisov, will you please—

MISS DENISOV. Well, what can I tell you then?

Q. How long did you stay in Mr. Hammond's apartment?

A. Until a quarter past five. He came home just before five. He opened the door and staggered in. His clothes were all wet. He had his eyes closed and when he opened them he looked at me but he didn't say anything. I told him I had come to take my sister away. I said I had agreed to wait until he came home, but now that he was home I was taking her away. I told him that she would file for an annulment the next day. He went to the window and picked up a bottle of Scotch and drank the last third in one gulp. Then he turned around to me and said in a very low voice that if I didn't leave at once, that he would throw me out of the window. Then he began to cry. He kept saying, "You fool, you fool," and cried. My sister came to me and asked me to leave and I did. While I was waiting for the elevator I heard him begin to scream. I went back to the door and listened. He stopped screaming and began to talk to Maria. I couldn't hear what he said. He was speaking in a very low voice. I stayed there for about five minutes and it was still quiet, so I left.



November 12, 1943

I SPENT the morning talking to Schumer. It appears he waited up all night last night until I fell asleep, and then he came in and read what I had written. This morning he wanted to talk to me about it. It was the first time he admitted any of his attempts to read what I have been writing these past two weeks. I expected him to try some of his old tricks, but he appeared

quite earnest and impressed, especially by what seems to be several references to this fear of mine, and all in all he was very receptive.

Essentially he is a man of sense. I am convinced of that now. I was greatly interested in his analysis of my fears, and possibly without his meaning to accomplish it, he made it seem foolish to me. We went over parts of my writing which were somewhat obscure, and I explained as well as I could, though not everything can be explained. He is expecting Reed tonight and asked me to complete these recollections by then, if I can. I look forward to tonight. The lapses, however, are disturbing. Obviously, with the evidence here before me, I cannot deny them.

Maria.

It has never been clear to me. I didn't even know they knew one another, to see each other, that is. No one did, I think. The only time Kathy Gray met Jim was on one of those Sunday parties, when Craig Ellis brought her. Ellis told me she was a photographers' model who wrote bad poetry. What you remembered about later was her long, exquisite legs and her shyness; she hardly ever spoke. Maybe that was what drew Jim to her. There was something else. She reminded me of Helen Drew, the girl Jim had been engaged to before she married someone else more in her own New York socialite circle. Could that have been it? Did she remind Jim of Helen?



(*COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR*)

THE relationship between Shilling and Kathy Gray has never been established. During the trial, Attorney Wells introduced a private detective who testified that he had proof of a clandestine affair between the two; the affair supposedly had been going on for a few weeks. However, this testimony was stricken from the record and this odd aspect of the case remained a mystery.—D. V. R.



This is what I told Maria:

Why can't I remember? I do remember, though. I remember most of it. Here and there something is lost. You think of that eye, the way it contracted. The worst thing Schumer can do is to have those men remove the pebbles outside. Does it matter how they affected me yesterday? He watches me. I told him it passed, that today I do not believe it. And yet to say it, to write: this is what I told Maria:

By Saturday I was calm enough to speak to Jim when he came to visit me. Even then, I thought

He held his head in his hands, then one hand moved away and he looked at me with one eye. The grey iris kept growing smaller, strangling my image, smaller and smaller. I believed him because I had to, but I knew I was lost. I saw it in that eye. It drove me wild. . . .

Here is Maria, waiting to listen to me. How still she is. Only the hands will not be still, though the tendons of every finger are taut and white. In sockets like raw wounds her eyes are dark with anguish. I want to cry out to her, Maria, my love, I have come home to you, to you alone now, to you who must listen to me, and still I cannot speak. Her sister has just left; I cannot understand why she was here. There was no warmth in the whiskey, and no courage. I stood in my wet clothes, the brine icy crystals on my body, the night sky still before my closed eyes, feeling her hos-

tility. The moments were slipping through my fingers and I knew I could not hold on to myself much longer, but her voice went on and on and I didn't know what she wanted but only knew she was speaking, and finally I said something . . . what was it? . . . something that made her leave. And then it is quiet, and here is Maria, and she is waiting to listen to me. But now there is only the strange sound that is myself crying, and I cannot stop. And then I scream.

I have lost myself now and I scream. And then I feel Maria's arms around me and a great quiet settles over me and I know I am home and I know it is as she says, that everything will be all right now, that when I have told her it will be easier to know because she will be with me. Now I tell her. I am speaking hurriedly because I still have the sense of time running away.

I tell her of everything that has happened between Jim and I. She has become very pale. She sits on the couch beside me, holding my cold hands in hers, and her eyes never leave my face. After awhile I am calm enough to stop while I change into dry clothes and we have coffee and smoke, and then I continue. And while I am talking, and because I am calm, I understand the utter unreality of what I am saying. But Maria does not doubt me and I go on though I know how I sound.

And how do I sound? This is the question I have asked myself so many times. This was the question when I first spoke to Jim, when I went to Reed; it has been the same writing this, both at the beginning of these recollections and now. It is still the question, for even when I speak to Schumer I find myself sometimes unable to believe what I am saying. Those are the times his influence is greatest on me. The same calm, as now, descends on me. And what is this calm? It is the final unreality of the Thing become a disease that wastes away every memory, until I no longer believe anything. This is the terrible majesty of the Thing—that the impact of the knowledge of its existence should be able to destroy everything associated with it—that even I, who carry within me its seed, the seed of my own destruction, do not believe it.

There, you see, is the final unreality of everything I have written. I do not believe it, for I could not believe it and live. It is this unbelief that allows me this calm, as false as a drugged sleep. And I know that to awaken is death.

And this is why I can write these things, and perhaps why they do not carry much meaning. How do I sound, I ask, but I know. How did Jim sound when he told Kathy of the Thing? She hadn't been able to understand. She hadn't been frightened. This is how I must sound when I tell Maria . . . *but I cannot show Maria the Thing and that is what Jim did then.*

All I have is words. . . .

THE Thing had begun to think of itself as a *She*. It had failed with Jim and me. Jim didn't know that yet, but it was already true. The Thing was trying to find an identity. It had taken control of Jim, and he was helpless.

Or so I thought. It came to me gradually. I didn't understand at first that Kathy was dead. The clear warm night was filled with a brooding silence through which I heard the Thing's voice like the sound of a wind. I heard the sound and knew some of its thoughts, but I heard almost no words.

It was only from what Jim said that I understood. . . .

He stood motionless at the pier, listening, then he said, "What have you

done to her?" He ran his hands through his hair and his head seemed too heavy for him to lift. If there was an answer, I did not hear it. He continued to stand there with his head bowed, and then he looked up and asked, in a voice drained of all emotion, "Then she will forget?" He was silent again, listening again, until he said, very quietly, "No, I cannot understand you now. To remember as long as she breathes—"

But the voice interrupted him.

A simple child
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

"I cannot understand you," Jim said hoarsely.

So softly death succeeded life in her,
She did but dream of heaven, and she
was there. . . .

"No!" Jim cried. "Not to kill! You were—"

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in
use—
As though to breathe were life!

"Not to kill!" Jim cried out. "You—" and he stepped back and raised his hands as if to ward off a blow, though I saw nothing. And then he was quiet again and I heard the Thing as I had heard it the first time, the voice that was a sigh torn from the earth, a mournful, gentle voice to which Jim sometimes replied, but was more often silent. And though I heard no more words from the Thing, I understood.

It had sought to establish a communion with a woman—a woman, who, because she could bear life, could then not be afraid of life—and who, in some way, could give life, perhaps human life, to the Thing.

This is what I understood.

Above all, the Thing itself becoming more visible. The living coil in the darkness, the reflected gleam of a particle.



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

THIS is the closest Hammond came to describing the Thing, which he says became more visible, but here again the narrative breaks off. (The relation of this lapse to the others is discussed in another comment further in the manuscript.)—D. V. R.



While I wait, counting the seconds

Morning. The grey light between the slatted blinds had slowly turned crimson and now it was gold. I have told Maria and I sit there, smoking quietly, wondering what is happening to me while I wait for her to reply to a question I asked and already could not remember. While I wait, counting the seconds, feeling them like tiny droplets of water falling into my cupped hand. Seconds before, every sense was incredibly sharp, nothing escaped me—someone walking in the courtyard below, somewhere a door opening, individual noises of birds, distant ringing of an alarm clock, faint odor of food, movement of a facial muscle, halted droop of an eyelid—but now the calmness is blotting out things.

It isn't until the doctor has gone that

I remember Maria crying out, "Elly, you're sick." I was in bed and I slept, and I woke up with a scream because I had dreamt I was alone.

But Maria was sitting by my bed.

The world is covered with a mist that rises slowly from the warm earth. Even the darkness is diluted and transparent. Nothing sleeps, no living thing. Dull sounds crawl through the mist bringing the torpescent warning of blind water things. Every step heavy, my feet cloaked, my approach muffled. And the mud, the slime, and the fragile intent of

Maria sitting close by. What has happened? What did I say while the doctor was here? Did I dream it, but if it was a dream is this the way he looked and why should I remember the way he looked if it was a dream?

"Darling, darling, it was a dream. You said nothing."

But now you know, Maria, and what must we do? You must run away and wait for me. I see death as I saw it last night. You must not stay with me. What did I say, Maria?

"Nothing. It was a dream. Sleep again, sleep."



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF DR. STERLING PRYCE, STATE'S WITNESS, ON DIRECT EXAMINATION BY DISTRICT ATTORNEY MALCOLM O'DAY)

Q. Will you please explain what you mean by 'special circumstances', Doctor, in reference to your visit to Mr. Hammond on August 8th?

A. I was at home, preparing to leave for the hospital, when Miss Deni—Mrs. Hammond, telephoned shortly before eight o'clock. She asked me to come at once to an address she gave me. As I've already stated, I had been Mrs. Hammond's family's physician for several years, as well as a fairly intimate friend. I gave up my private practice when I became superintendent of the Maywood General Hospital, but I still acted as personal physician for some of my friends. Mrs. Hammond was aware of this, and she explained she had just been married and was calling me on behalf of her husband.

Q. Please continue.

A. I was extremely busy that morning, so I offered to send a competent staff physician—this was after I was satisfied there was no emergency—but Mrs. Hammond insisted that I, personally, come.

Q. Do you recall what was said? What Mrs. Hammond said, that is?

A. She told me he was feverish. I asked if she had taken his temperature and if so, what it was. She replied that it was 101. I did not consider this alarming, and said as much. Mrs. Hammond then told me that she thought her husband was in a coma, and she believed he was suffering from some sort of shock. She sounded quite urgent, and more because of that than anything else, I went.

Q. And what did you find, Doctor?

A. I examined Mr. Hammond thoroughly. He appeared to be asleep when I arrived and I had some difficulty rousing him. He seemed quite exhausted and hardly appeared to know I was there. Mrs. Hammond told me she had given him a more than adequate dose of sodium amytal, and I thought that explained his comatose state. His temperature was slightly above 100, and I thought it possible that he was suffering a mild attack of the grippe. I asked Mrs. Hammond

about the shock she had mentioned over the telephone, but she didn't seem to know what I meant. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Hammond's behavior was extremely mystifying. She started to speak to me several times without finishing what she said. I decided she was overwrought because of some personal matter, prescribed for Mr. Hammond and advised her to take a sedative. I went to the door, accompanied by Mrs. Hammond, and I went so far as to open the door before she put a hand on my arm and stopped me. She closed the door and started to say—I remember her words distinctly—"Sterling, there's something I must tell you—" when suddenly we heard Mr. Hammond's voice.

Q. Where were you when you heard Mr. Hammond?

A. In the foyer with Mrs. Hammond.

Q. Could Mr. Hammond see you?

A. No. The foyer is two rooms away and shaped like an L.

Q. But you were able to hear what Mr. Hammond said?

A. Very easily, because he almost shouted what he said.

Q. And do you remember what he said, Doctor?

A. Distinctly. He said Mrs. Hammond's life wasn't safe with him. He said that what had happened the night before might happen again. He told her to leave him before it was too late, and that he would stay and face it alone.

Q. How did Mrs. Hammond react to this?

A. She ran to his room the moment he began shouting. I followed her but she came out and asked me to leave. Mr. Hammond was still talking, but in a much quieter voice, after he saw me.

Q. And then you left?

A. Yes, after promising to return that evening.

Q. Did you return, Doctor?

A. No. Mrs. Hammond telephoned me at the hospital during the afternoon and told me it would not be necessary for me to come again. I had no desire to pry but I tried to question her. She avoided answering and after thanking me, terminated the conversation.

Q. Thank you, Doctor. Your witness, Mr. Wells.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF DR. STERLING PRYCE, STATE'S WITNESS, ON CROSS EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY CHARLES WELLS)

Q. Your specialty, you say, Doctor, is orthopedics. Do you consider yourself qualified as a specialist in pediatrics?

A. No.

Q. Or roentgenology?

A. No.

Q. Or carcinoma?

A. Frankly, Mr. Wells, I don't understand—

Q. I beg your pardon, Doctor, but for the moment I must request that you answer my questions with a simple yes or no. Do you consider yourself qualified to offer a definitive diagnosis in cases of cancer?

A. No.

Q. Or insanity—in cases concerning mental abnormalities?

A. No.

Q. Is it possible that you might visit a patient who was mentally ill and not know it? Just answer whether or not it's possible.

A. It's possible, though—

Q. Just yes or no, Doctor. Is it

possible? Yes or no?

A. Yes.



(EXCERPT FROM THE NEW YORK POST, NOVEMBER 17, 1941, PAGE 3, FINAL EDITION)

DEFENSE UNVEILS STRATEGY

Triple Killer Will Plead Insanity, Attorney Hints

IN A COURTROOM SO TURBULENT that Judge Revere threatened to clear it, Charles Wells, attorney for Elliot Hammond, the accused "triple-killer," indicated today that he may plead his client's insanity as a motivating force.

The closing moments of today's session, which began the second week of the trial, were packed with dynamite. Until today, the close-mouthed, bland Mr. Wells had given little indication of his intended strategy. Fighting the testimony of almost every previous witness with a deadly attention to the most minute details, the famous criminal lawyer had—in spite of rumors to the contrary—lent credence to the theory that he intended to fight the case purely on the facts of evidence.

With the calling of Dr. Sterling Pryce, superintendent of the swank Maywood Hospital, as a State's witness, the case took an abrupt and dramatic turn. Before Mr. Wells, who was a portrait in *politesse* throughout, was through with Dr. Pryce, he had forced an admission that the Doctor was not only *not* an expert in matters of mental abberration, but that he might well not have detected symptoms of insanity which Hammond might have manifested. That such specialists are waiting to testify for the defense is scarcely a matter for conjecture. Mr. Wells, with his customary economy, was wasting no time, now that the direction of the State's case is plain, and his own intent is now obvious.

Today's session began with the examina-



What did I say, Maria?

The hours were running from me. I kept waking and finding the day more and more gone, and there was nothing I could do. Maria would not leave me, though I begged her. But toward evening I began to plan what I had to do. I was beginning to see that I had to do something, after Jim called. Maria told me he had telephoned before noon, and I saw in her eyes that she would not leave me because she had not believed me. He told Maria he called to ask about me, because last night when he saw me I had been acting peculiarly. Last night when he saw me, sailing off on a swollen river of blood. When he saw me?

No, Maria.

"Try to think, Elly, try to remember." Because all I had ever had were words and they were not enough. "He said Kathy Gray was there and you left with her. You must try to remember, darling."

She kissed my hands and her tears dropped on them, and where they touched me they turned to ice. The breath froze in my lungs and a vast, benumbing calmness came over me and the sweat on my forehead became cool and fresh. But Maria, if I saw him (says this absurd, bewildered, but above all, silent voice of reason) I must have told him about us, about you and I, and if that was so, and it would be so, Maria, did he say anything to you about it? Did he wish you happiness, Maria? What did he say when he found it was you who answered the telephone?

But I didn't ask the question because already I could hear the answer: "But did you tell him? Try to remember. Try to remember . . ."

And thus I did not tell him and there is no remembering and no reality, and nothing had been and nothing was known—but no matter, I knew—I never doubted.

And then the police, naturally? But not yet. What good will it do to discover Kathy Gray dead? She lies half buried under a mountain of refuse, her

body pierced and the sunlight pouring down to keep warm the blood that surrounded her. And last night, he said, I left with her. I left with her. . . .

Yes, Maria, I'm trying to remember. I sat by the window and let my thoughts wash me clean. There was nothing to remember but there was something to understand. I must sit here and work it out. There is no longer any panic or helplessness. The decision will be made in time now but first I must think. Let me understand it first. No, not the doctor; this is nothing for the doctor. Call him and tell him not to come again. Let me sit here and think.

So the day was slowly lost, dissolving into a soft and troubled night, leaving me in darkness.

Even now—knowing the end—I do not know whether I ever understood what Jim was doing or meant to do. Perhaps there is something to remember, after all. Perhaps there was once a fragment too minute for a myopic terror to perceive, and only now, with the terror gone, can it be returned to the larger meaning it alone can complete.

Wracked with pain, in a dreamless haunted slumber, the sleeper tosses uneasily in his bed in darkness, in a room with no windows, behind an iron door. The air is foul with nightmares. Over his head, breathing in unison with his broken rhythms, alarmed and wakeful, his portrait hangs on a wall. The murderer comes into the room soundlessly, so swiftly that the sluggish air whirls behind him in semi-visible thick eddies. He goes at once to the bed and stands for a moment looking down at the naked form on the white sheets. With a sudden thrust he plunges a pale hand deep into the sleeper's body, grinding his teeth, writhing, sweat pouring down him from his exertion, and tears out the sleeper's heart. The heart leaps convulsively in his hand but he tightens his fingers until shadowy rivulets of blood have traced a delicate pattern down the length of his forearm. He begins to laugh hysterically, when he looks up and sees that the portrait has witnessed everything, its face twisted in agony, screaming inaudibly. He reaches up and stuffs the heart into the open mouth, then tears away the portrait's face. Carefully, with nimble fingers, he wraps the heart in the fragment of canvas and hurls it through the farthest wall. Very slowly, still struggling, it falls through transparent darkness to a far off gutter and is washed away. The bloody hands are wiped on the wall and the sheets, but even before the murderer has left, these distinct stencils have turned violet, then gray, and are gone with him. In the morning, at the precise instant when a stray dog has finished eating the heart, the sleeper is discovered. He lies very still. Only his eyes can move, but they rotate in their sockets without being able to see what has happened to him, and because of this he does not understand the turmoil in his room. The murderer comes in to see him, wringing his hands, weeping as he vows to save him. Thousands of shocked, sympathetic people search the city for the heart, and the dog follows one group, helping them look.

Tonight I may have the answer. Schumer was at the door to tell me that Reed is coming, bringing the box with him. And so he has forced me to summon the imperfect memory again, to wonder again what unguarded moment first recalled it and why. The sense of the tightening circle is stronger than ever now. Is this too a dream, or is it the one reality that precedes a final release from thoughts I cannot

Saturday, the next day, quite early,

Jim came to see me. Almost from the moment he arrived, as soon as he entered my room, I felt a recession of fear. I felt that he needed me. Maria let him in and a few moments later she left the house, leaving us alone: Maria

I must try to sleep.

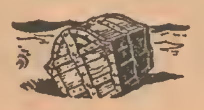
Tell me everything he said leave nothing out no detail no matter how slight you were there last night you came while she was there and no one knows when you left But first before I say anything you must tell me I said what you are doing and why you told Maria you saw me last night and why you said I left with her I saw her lying dead I cannot erase the memory of her lying there in the swamp

It is no use. I am too tired.

I COULDN'T look into his eyes. They seemed to pierce my brain, their pale depths brimming with invisible calculation, the murderous intent sunken from sight, crying out to me for help. The murderer had found the portrait a witness, though it could utter no word. What was to be done? What can we do? What help do you want from me now that I have told you? What has been happening that I do not understand? Thus the hollow talking in darkness while the murderer's soliloquy proceeds uninterrupted.

But first swear you will help me.

The voice a sound receding, crying for help, lost in pain. The same voice that had been filled with bitter fury when he had cried out against the Thing. Helpless, I thought, while his hands were poised for the plunge.



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

These sections of the manuscript, as it becomes increasingly confused, seem to have been written with unusually frequent interruptions. This passage, as well as the one which precedes it, appear to be attempts to reconstruct the conversation Hammond had with Shilling. In the first, one almost feels the sense of urgency Hammond mentions many times. He seems to be fighting time in his effort to put everything down, with little regard for punctuation or clear conveyance of meaning. Then, it appears, he is too weary to continue. He begins again later, but now, though he is steady and deliberate, his strange and almost surrealist parable of the sleeper and the murderer re-appears, woven into the reporting of his conversation. No distinct meaning is apparent, but he seems to have identified himself with the sleeper and Shilling with the murderer; this obviously a later interpretation. After another pause, perhaps realizing his failures, he resumes more coherently.

The progress of his disintegration during the period this diary was kept is strikingly illustrated by a comparison of the documentation of this conversation with the one recorded on Nov. 7th. The one of Nov. 7th, never mentioning the idea of unreality, is so clearly recalled word for word that it seems highly artificial. On the other hand, ironically enough, this one, with its intense preoccupation and wanderings, dwelling on its unreality, seems much more real than the other. (Further notes interpreting these passages appear a little later on.—D. V. R.



There was no denying him. There was no sense fighting him if I believed we were together in this. There was no weapon I could give him by telling him what I had seen. I had seen what had happened, and knowing it, he had turned to me for help. And yet, what help was there for him or for me? What was there to do now? It was beyond us, as it had been from the start, as I

had known from the start. It had gone too far and whatever now had to be done was no longer for us to do. And so I told him, believing we were at the last summing up before the debt was presented.

The way he listened to me then. His head bowed, cradled in his hands, elbows resting on knees, sitting motionless, saying nothing, then one hand moved away and he was looking at me through one eye. Lost then, not knowing why, forseeing nothing but the certainty. The grey eye held me.

"Do what? Tell whom?" Hearing the voice but unable to see his lips because a hand was before them. "You were right then. We should never have kept it to ourselves, but don't you see what will happen if we tell now? Don't you see it has gone too far?"

But it was not for us to decide. None of the decisions was for us, not from the beginning. And this was the beginning. There was no end in sight. The grey iris contracting, closing on a decision already made and irrevocable.

"Kathy Gray is dead. If we tell now—"

"Tell, Jim, tell! From here—"

"Listen to me," so softly, so troubled. "Do you understand what it is to be charged with murder? Do you see this was murder?"

"But not you, Jim. Not I. We—"

"Who, then?"

The question whispered but the echoes would not die away, and the finality in the grey eye and in the question. The question whispered and the answer without substance and the question to follow. No answer then, no reality. Who, then? The Thing. And can you show them the Thing, can you make anyone understand, can you answer with words that have no substance, can you tell them what you mean? To this question no answer, no reality. We have left the world that can be comprehended by men. We are the prisoners of a private knowledge, isolated in a private world. What answer can you make?

No matter. Tell, Jim. Take this from our hands. Take it from a world of multiplying horrors, from the deadly potential of continued silence, the evil silence which spawned it, where it festers and distills an unknown poison. End the monstrous dream for us who have slept with it too long. This the sleeper says to the murderer, for to him all are locked with him in slumber and all live in his nightmare. Tell, Jim, and let whatever happens . . .

"With your life at stake, Elly?"

Even then I thought, because with us together . . .

"Your life alone, Elly! *You alone!*"

WE TWO, primarily, but neither of us, and if one alone, not I, though I had shared the silence, but neither of us alone.

"And alone you haven't a chance. The only chance was for us to have told together. You alone now, Elly, giving away your life—and you'll be giving it away—now that it's begun to understand happiness. What of Maria, Elly? Is your life yours to give away? You alone?"

He stood up, his hands covering his face, his body trembling.

"Because you've said you saw me last night?" I said. "And because you've said I left with Kathy Gray?"

He turned to me and only in the way he looked at me did I understand what was written on my face. I remember nothing of what I felt then, only that I stared at him, that I spoke quietly, that there was a beginning of awareness in my voice, that these things, seen and heard, were fearful. The portrait screaming.

"Elly, listen to me! I had to do it! *I had to say what I did!* Don't you understand—it was the Thing making me say it—because she had already done something else to make me safe. I didn't know until yesterday that you had been in the yards Thursday night. If you hadn't been there—if I hadn't been told you were there, nothing would have happened . . . I wouldn't have had to say anything!"

The explanation, the reason for everything, the sleeper's heart already in the murderer's hand, stuffing the portrait's mouth, and somewhere a stray dog waiting, understanding only its own hunger. And this too—*that he kept referring to the Thing as She* . . .

What was it he told me, the things he said that no other being could understand? What were these complexities in the strangled voice, while the iris of an eye held me, making my image small, corrupting my doubts, bewildering me until I knew only that I was lost? What did he say of Her who had begun by praising the fathomless universe for life and had come to question whether to breathe were life? Locked in the prison of our knowledge, sinking deeper into the mire of unreality, we communicated in words that we alone understood, words that were the symbols of our servitude . . . of a freedom long lost and never to be regained. How long had it been since we knew the clear light of day, before we exchanged its warmth for blind depths of mud, hot with the incubation of unfathomed evil? What? Of these vagaries? What?

Is this what you remember? Is this the unsubstantial chain that has held you so long? Of these fantasies? What?

Yes, of these. Of all these and more, but of these.

THAT he had told the Thing the death of a human was a matter for other humans to punish, that punishment would come to him, as a murderer. That the Thing had falsified the spark of life in Kathy Gray and raised her from the swamp where she lay dead. That he had walked with the body of Kathy Gray to where a night watchman saw them, spoke to them. That the body of Kathy Gray had been made to leave the yards long enough to be seen leaving.

Of these unrealities and more, meaningful only to us.

That when another watchman told him the next day that I had been in the yards for hours that night, how panic had overtaken him, and of the only way out, counseled by Her, who saw and understood everything. That there was only one human who had seen Kathy Gray in the semblance of life after I had left. That if this one human stopped existing, how simple a matter it would be to say that I had left with Kathy Gray, for none would be able to say I hadn't. None but I . . . and I had been seen by many that night, arriving and leaving strangely, acting strangely. (Do we not believe, he asks rhetorically that a murderer must or may act strangely before and after the commission of the deed?) That this was counseled to him in his panic, and forced on him in the absence of his will.

Of these and more.

That the cycle— oh, yes, the cycle. Remember the cycle. The cycle, then, had changed again, restoring to him his clarity of thought and his will. He refused to acquiesce to the murder of the one man who had seen Kathy Gray alive (as he thought) after I had left. And now his will his own (because the cycle had changed) he had come to me. He was there this moment, to tell me, to warn me, to beg me for help. For still Kathy Gray lay in the swamp, her body mangled as I had seen it, dead in

the dank, cancerous embrace of the mud, buried with rusting metal for a tombstone.

That because the cycle had changed there was a way out.

Of this the cycle. Most, muchly, muchmosted, mostmuchly and in the main of the cycle friend of the poor, comforter of the blind and timid, resource of the infirm. All this the cycle. A barren tale now, it appears, banal and diluted nonsense. And yet, at the same time what a formidable adversary among the enemy hosts at the disposal of the murderer though why? Where was its strength? What magic power lay in the projection of this tale to make me believe it? Of such fantasies?

How could I not believe him? Everything was as he said. He could have done what he had outlined as a plan. He had his witnesses. He could have done away with the single dissenting voice and had me held for the murder, but he hadn't. Why hadn't he? Why should he be here now? Why should he be telling me this?



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

SEVERAL new avenues of thought are opened in the preceding half-dozen or so broken passages. These passages I consider among the most important in the manuscript.

Hammond is evidently striving to report the conversation with some objectivity, once or twice even to the extent of listing what Shilling told him. He is unsuccessful, at least partly because his later evaluations of the conversation keep intruding, commenting, as it were, and in effect the result is almost an inner dialogue, with Hammond the writer talking to Hammond the then speaker. But now a new note is evident. Hammond is reviewing the conversation, and though he mentions the unreality of what they discussed, he now seems to think of it as something unreal *even at that time.* Until this point he has seldom doubted the reality of what he remembers. Now he writes with ironic wonder that he believed in such "vagaries" and "fantasies." The *cycle,* which he subsequently discusses, comes in for special contempt in the rarely playful paragraph where he sneers: "Most, muchly . . . friend of the poor . . . resource of the infirm." He labels it a ". . . tale of . . . diluted nonsense," and asks, "What magic power lay in the projection . . . to make me believe . . . such fantasies?"

The greater question, at least to me, is: What strengthened Hammond's *disbelief* at this point in his writing? For this is the high point. His disbelief is mentioned elsewhere, but in these passages it recurs again and again. Why here? Is there any other element present which might help explain this transient but powerful mood?

I hesitate to mention the hypothesis of hypnosis at this point, mainly because it seems premature. And yet, to avoid it now is to forego a rare opportunity for insight to this manuscript. Schumer himself holds very strongly for the theory of hypnosis for more substantial reasons which will later be appended, but it seems to him (and to me) that some evidence can be found here. For in these passages, more than anywhere else, Hammond keeps writing of *the grey iris of an eye.* "I couldn't look into his eyes. They seemed to pierce my brain," he says. Before that he wrote: "The . . . iris . . . strangled my image . . . I believed him because I had to . . . it drove me wild." Now again he says, "The grey eye held me," and a little later, "The grey iris contracting, closing on a decision already made and irrevocable," and once again, ". . . the iris of an eye held me, making my image small . . . bewildering me . . ."

It is true enough that nowhere does Hammond say anything about hypnosis, or of later suspicions, but surely these references, these questions and half-answers, are more than coincidences. When we remember that Hammond was writing under a great emotional strain and that much of what he wrote was in a literal sense a subconscious outpouring, a subconscious suspicion becomes a more likely theory. Here, then, remembering what Shilling and he

discussed, remembering the eye, he subconsciously connects the two and consequently derides the conversation. "What magic power lay in the projection?" he asks, having elsewhere already answered: "I believed because I had to, but I knew I was lost. I saw it in that eye." Farther than this Hammond does not venture, but later developments make this a matter of paramount importance.

STILL another matter claims attention here. Hammond chronicles the conversation to the point where Shilling says he came to beg help. As proof of his sincerity, Shilling tells him what he could have done had he wanted to let Hammond be blamed for the murder of Kathy Gray. To reconstruct (and to interpret, in part): he tells Hammond that the Thing gave Kathy Gray the semblance of life long enough to be seen leaving, but that one person alone saw her. With this one witness, he says, he could have done as the Thing "counseled in his panic" and "forced in the absence of his will"—that is, have the witness killed in the yards by the Thing and let the blame gravitate to Hammond. But, he says, he did not do it because he regained his will (which he later explains as due to the cycle) and has come to Hammond for help.

If the reader recalls a previous insert of the testimony of Thomas Stapley, Stapley was obviously the witness to whom Shilling referred. This passage would then seem to explain the discrepancy between Stapley's testimony and what Hammond wrote. Granting for the moment that Hammond is writing the truth (that is absolute, not relative truth) and that all these things actually happened, it was then possible for Hammond to see Kathy Gray dead, and for Stapley to see her alive (as he thought) some hours later.

But what appears now to have been definitely not true is that Shilling could have had Stapley killed in the yards (the only place he could do it through the Thing). According to his testimony, Stapley was not at the yards for six days following that night, and when he returned, was fired and left for the west coast. "How could I not believe him?" Hammond asks, referring to Shilling. "Everything was as he said. He could have done (it)." *But he couldn't,* and this seemingly unimportant loophole, unknown to Hammond, becomes extremely interesting as Hammond's story draws to an end. For, if we believe Hammond, we can here find a basis for understanding Shilling's motive in coming to Hammond for help, ". . . the murderous intent sunken from sight, crying . . . for help."—D.V.R.



That is to say, believing all this. The cycle, then.

"What do you mean by the cycle?" I asked. "What do you mean it has changed and that now, because of the change, there is a way out?"

"I'm not sure that I understand it myself, but surely you felt it," he told me eagerly. "You told me you felt it, knew what you were doing, what you were thinking—you felt her power of compulsion! I know you did! And yet, it wasn't always so, was it? Weren't there some times when you knew you were beyond her influence, without knowing how or why?"

Yes, I had known, but not saying anything. The night I told the story to Reed and couldn't explain how I could tell him when I knew the Thing didn't want me to tell. The times I wanted to tell Maria and was unable. That last night itself, in the yards, when the Thing should have been aware of my presence and wasn't. The cycle, then? "Her influence wanes from time to time," he said. Once when I was able to tell Reed? Again, that last night, when she didn't know I was in the yards and later when I told Maria? And wasn't that the same time that he felt his will returning?



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

NOTICE the increasing frequency with which Hammond himself refers to the Thing as a feminine entity.—D. V. R.



"I can't begin to explain it. It's a periodic thing. Sometimes I think it's related to the gravitation of the moon—possibly that has some bearing on its affinity to the feminine. I don't know. All I know is that I feel it from time to time, and this is one of the times! This is one of my intervals in which I can think alone and act alone and feel myself an individual. . . ."

And underneath, though it is nowhere in these words of his that I remember, underneath them as he spoke was the hint, the veiled and unspoken thought, that he was somehow abjectly bound to the Thing, that he had been bound from the beginning, though he would not confess it even now. And there was something else, something now a pale blur in memory, that linked his work to her influence. Something to explain more than anything had, why he had found such peace and such strange exhilaration in the yards. Something utterly beyond comprehension, a scabrous intimation of the relationship between him and the Thing that thought of itself as something that was a She.

"Our one chance, Elly! Perhaps our last chance! This is the first time I've ever thought of escaping, and when the cycle is over all these thoughts will be known to her! *Elly, listen.* She's planning something! She's failed with me—I'm useless to her. *Do you know what it means for me to go back there?*"

And not to go back? To have Kathy Gray's body found? To have her found and not to have come back? No. . . .

But the Thing had brought her back to life. . . .

"No," he whispered fearfully, "she only looked as if she were—"

But that was enough. . . .

He kept shaking his head. "No, Elly. I've thought of the same thing a thousand times since then, but it's too late. The way the Thing killed her made it impossible. If only I had been able to forsee it, even if I couldn't have stopped it, that could have been done—she need never have returned at all, but that doesn't matter now! Even her death doesn't matter now if the Thing isn't stopped! Haven't you seen enough to believe me? Can't you understand that this is just the beginning for the Thing? Can't you see that she won't stop here, that she'll try again and again until her failures drive her mad? Can't you see that whatever her mind is, that it's already unbalanced? And then what? Do we have more than an inkling of her terrible powers? Can either of us predict the end unless she is stopped? Listen to me, Elly! This is our last chance! Help me!"

WHEN he left I looked down into the street and saw Maria meet him. They could not have spoken together long because Maria came up soon afterward. I never found out what they had spoke about.

Yes, the plan. There was a plan, unreal as the rest of it. If it worked, the Thing might be destroyed, and what remained of Kathy Gray would be lost forever. If it worked there would

If it worked they would never find Kathy, still lying in the swamp, surrounded

Someone, you see, stopped the dog from eating the heart, but it was too late. The heart couldn't be put back again and the sleeper lay there and no one listened to the portrait because no one expected it to speak. Then, of

course, there were a few things I had to keep in mind, things to remember, signals and places, before I'd see Jim the next night after they would all be gone. All these people, you see, who had been invited to the party on Sunday. Scattered, then, to search the city for some sign of the heart, but nothing would help. It was all part of the plan to help the story when the police

Seven o'clock. How distant Schumer's voice sounds through the door. Time for dinner, he says, cautious to keep his voice within the bounds he has set for himself. There must be no trace of a mock cheerfulness but he must avoid a careless, automatic note, since if there was nothing important waiting tonight, why should Schumer himself go to the trouble of knocking at my door? How well he is suited to his work. He manages the precise intonation. Seven o'clock, he says, as if perhaps I had overlooked the passing of time and he stopped by to remind me, but nothing more, though I understand how badly he wants me to come out and talk to him. I am often sorry that I understand his methods so well. I make his task difficult in a way that none of the others here do; he has not mentioned Reed at all, for instance. How easy it would be for him to say Reed is coming, but he doesn't. He wants me to ask. He wants me to bring up the subject. This dark room is so still. The desk swims in darkness, caught for an instant in the light from this one lamp, an island of awareness. He descends the stairs with no emphasis, knowing I listen carefully enough to hear him leave, and in this way informing me that I am, and always have been here, a free agent. These scattered sheets of paper show progress. Reed is coming. There isn't much left to put down now. Reed is coming, bringing the box with him. This much I know from Schumer's careful avoidance of the subject. If anything had gone wrong he would have told me; he does not want me to be disappointed in such matters. So, knowing the box is on its way here, he waits for me to mention it to see if I remember. Yes, I remember.

He had invited many of them to the party that Sunday. That was to help the story when the police investigated, as they would surely do. Simple enough, you see. The party became very disorderly and wild—what must have happened was that some of the people there who had become too drunk to understand what they were doing had wandered off and accidentally found the shack and engineered the frightful prank which thankfully had hurt no one.

There was nothing left to do but wait until late Sunday night. Nothing but to wait, as I am waiting now. And both times, with the waiting revolving around the same thing.

Only this time I know I am waiting for it.



(EXCERPTS FROM THE TESTIMONY OF MISS TAMARA DENISOV, STATE'S WITNESS, ON DIRECT EXAMINATION BY DISTRICT ATTORNEY MALCOLM O'DAY.)

Q. And when did you see your sister again, Miss Denisov?

A. On Sunday, August 10th.

Q. Did you hear from her between Thursday night—or, I should say, early Friday morning—and Sunday?

A. Yes. She telephoned me Friday evening and again Saturday night at about eleven. You see, I told her where

to reach me—

Q. Suppose you tell us about both calls, Miss Denisov?

A. The first one was on Friday, at approximately 6:30 P.M. I was home at the time. Maria spoke very softly. She told me her . . . that Mr. Hammond was asleep and she didn't want to disturb him. She said she was calling just to let me know that she was all right, and she didn't want me to worry. She hung up quite suddenly, but not before I had told her where I'd be all day the next day, in case she wanted me. She called me the next night at about eleven. I was at the Bester's. She told me that Mr. Shilling had visited Mr. Hammond that afternoon, and that she would see me the following day at the party on Mr. Shilling's houseboat. Again she told me there was nothing to worry about, and that she would explain when she saw me.

Q. And did you see her that Sunday at the party?

A. Yes.

Q. Will you tell us, please, what your sister and you spoke about?

A. We hardly had a chance to discuss anything personal. There were too many people about for privacy. But just at the beginning—just after she arrived, I was alone with her for a few minutes. She told me then that Mr. Hammond was in terrible trouble, that he had done something that was driving him—

Q. Do you think you can quote her exactly, Miss Denisov?

A. Yes, I had good reason to remember. She said, "Elly's in terrible trouble. I'm afraid to tell you just yet what it's about, but he's told me something I just can't bring myself to believe. I've got to find out how much truth there is in it before he drives himself to a nervous breakdown." Those were her words, practically verbatim.

Q. Did she explain to what she referred?

A. No.

Q. Naturally, then, you paid attention to her actions that afternoon?

A. Yes. Maria was with Mr. Shilling several times that afternoon. They talked together very earnestly. Then, toward evening, she walked off alone, along one of the ramps that paralleled the shore. A few minutes later Mr. Shilling followed her. When they returned together half an hour or so later, Maria looked ghastly. I spoke to her but she walked right by me without answering. Shortly afterward she started to leave, alone.

Q. That was the last time you saw her alive?

A. Not quite. Mr. Shilling missed her soon afterward. He was carrying a book or something—a bulky package I couldn't make out—which she had evidently forgotten. I told him where she had gone and went part of the way after her. We caught up to her and I waited while he gave her the package and escorted her the rest of the way to the gate. He was greatly upset when he came back to me. I tried to talk to him but he didn't offer any sensible answers, aside from saying that he wished Maria hadn't gone home alone.

Q. Now, Miss Denisov, I have here a chart of the yards. This large X in black indicates the location of the houseboat. You said your sister walked off along one of the ramps that runs parallel to the shore. Will you take this red pencil and indicate the direction she took, and which Mr. Shilling took when he followed her? Thank you. I see you have marked the ramp leading southeast. It is the only one in that direction, and does not intersect with any other short of the east fence. With the Court's permission I will show



"Miss Denisov, I have here a chart of the yards" . . .

this chart to the jury. (Mr. O'Day gave the chart to the foreman.) This is where Mrs. Hammond and Mr. Shilling walked, just before Mrs. Hammond returned in a condition described by Miss Denisov as ghastly. Thank you, Miss Denisov, I have no further questions. Mr. Wells?



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF MISS TAMARA DENISOV, STATE'S WITNESS, ON CROSS EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY CHARLES WELLS)

Q. Miss Denisov, you have testified that your sister told you her husband was driving himself to a nervous breakdown, is that not so?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know what a nervous breakdown means, Miss Denisov?

A. I'm not sure I know what you mean, Mr. Wells.

Q. I mean this: are you aware that medically ignorant people often refer to several types of insanity as nervous breakdowns?

MR. O'DAY. Your Honor, I object to the medically learned Mr. Wells contemptible debasing of the privilege of cross-questioning to get this message across to the jury.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. Really, Mr. O'Day, a simple objection is enough. I will sustain the objection. Mr. Wells, the witness has not been presented as a medical authority, or as an authority on popular fallacies. I can see no benefit to be derived from an answer either way.

Q. Miss Denisov, did your sister ever tell you that she thought her husband was insane?

A. She did not.

Q. Yet you maintain you and your sister were on intimate terms? Can you supply any possible reason why she should not tell you such a thing if she did think so, and why she might tell someone else?

A. No.

Q. Not even the fact that she knew you hated her husband? That she might sooner trust someone she knew to be a friend of her husband?

A. I didn't hate her—Mr. Hammond.

Q. Is that why you consistently refuse to refer to him as her husband? Do you call him Mr. Hammond because you love him?

A. I grew to hate him later because of what he did.

Q. Then you admit—

MR. O'DAY. Your Honor, I must object to Mr. Wells' pointless badgering.

MR. WELLS. Your Honor, I will submit to the verb, badgering, but not to the adverb, pointless. I have a definite point to make, and I think I have established it with Miss Denisov's admission that she now, at least, hates the defendant, Mr. Hammond. I submit that this is a confession of prejudice which has a definite bearing on Miss Denisov's testimony. It is not inconceivable that Miss Denisov is not telling the whole truth. I can see no further purpose which might be served by continued questioning. I will excuse the witness.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. This Court is in agreement with you in principle, Mr. Wells. However, I think the word badgering, in the grammatical construction Mr. O'Day employed, is a noun, which would make the word, pointless, an adjective. But I will reserve judgment on this matter. Step

down, Miss Denisov. Mr. Wells has excused you.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF ALFRED BESTER, DEFENSE WITNESS, ON DIRECT EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY CHARLES WELLS)

Q. How good a friend of Mrs. Maria Hammond were you, Mr. Bester?

A. My wife and I considered Maria among our closest friends. We had known each other more than two years, and we generally saw Maria more than once a week. In the summer of 1940 she lived with us for three months at our place in Connecticut.

Q. You were at this party on Mr. Shilling's houseboat on Sunday, August 10th, were you not, and at some time during that afternoon you and Mrs. Hammond had a conversation, did you not?

A. Yes.

Q. Will you tell us what that conversation was about?

A. I offered her congratulations on her marriage and asked what was the matter with her husband. The question seemed to throw her completely off balance. She angrily demanded an explanation, which I gave. It was simple enough. Mr. David Reed had phoned me and told me he was going to visit Mr. Hammond that afternoon before he came to the party, and that Mr. Hammond was evidently laid up. He had asked me if I wanted to come along to help cheer him up. When I told her this, she almost burst into tears. She took me aside and told me that she thought her husband was insane—

Q. Were those her exact words?

A. Yes. She—

MR. O'DAY. Your Honor, I object. I think it is high time the defense came out in the open. This constant barrage of innuendo and unqualified opinions has only one object, and that is to influence the jury unduly and illegally. This evidence is immaterial and irrelevant. If the defense is going to plead insanity, I think it is time that the validity of such a defense was weighed by qualified experts in the matter. I am sick and tired of hearing testimony that is wholly without value, offered purely as ballyhoo and an advance build-up for opinions from the defense alienists, which I am sure will shortly be forthcoming.

MR. WELLS. If it please the Court, I cannot agree with the estimable District Attorney's crystal-gazing. I do not agree that it is time for anything except for him to sit down and stop interrupting. I offer this testimony for the jury's appraisal, not the District Attorney's. I am endeavoring to reconstruct, from what evidence I can find, a picture of the defendant's state of mind at the time of the crime.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. Mr. Wells, while I agree with the validity of your intentions as you express them, I do not see how this witness, at least, who is merely repeating an alleged opinion, offers testimony of any value. The testimony offered is also for the appraisal of the Court, and I may as well tell you now that I will instruct the jury to place very little weight in such testimony. You may take exception, of course.

MR. WELLS. Exception. I will dismiss the witness and call Mr. David V. Reed.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF DAVID V. REED, DEFENSE WITNESS, ON DIRECT EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY CHARLES WELLS)

Q. And so after you received this letter from Mr. Hammond, which has been marked Exhibit 19, you made no attempt to call Mr. Hammond because the letter led you to believe he was still away?

A. That's right. It was dated the 7th and I got it the 9th.

Q. But on the 10th you went to see him, did you not? You were going to the party at the houseboat, but first you went to see him. I want you to tell us why you went to see him and what transpired during your visit. I want you to tell us about that visit in the light of its previous background. Is that clear, Mr. Reed?

A. I think so. Mr. Hammond visited me at my home the previous Tuesday night; that was August 5th. He was with me for several hours, and during that time we discussed what I thought to be a story idea of Mr. Hammond's. Toward the end of the evening, Mr. Hammond insisted the story he had outlined was true in every particular.

Q. What was this story?

A. He told me that Shilling and he had discovered a metal monster that was alive in the swamps of the yard. It was supposedly a new form of life, without parallel or similarity to any form of life that had ever existed in the universe, and that it had just come into being. This monster was invisible and had great powers. Most of these powers were still a mystery to Mr. Hammond, he told me, but he did know it had a compulsive influence. It had forced them not to disclose its being, and he was able to tell me about it only because he had stayed away from the yards for a few days Even then he didn't quite understand how he could tell me about it, he claimed. He told me the monster was antagonistic to human life and he feared it. He had come to me for advice and help. He didn't know what to do with his knowledge of this monster. Oh, yes. He had seen part of it one time; he saw something like a small watchspring that was red hot. It was an experiment of the monster's, to see how humans would react to the sight.

Q. This is the story he told you as something that was true?

A. Yes. He built the whole thing up before he told me it was true. I had merely considered it an interesting idea. Well, when I was finally convinced he was in dead earnest, I decided he needed a doctor. I went to get a friend of mine, but when we returned he had gone. He left me a note saying he felt much better. I talked it over with Doctor Camiel—

Q. Excuse me, Mr. Reed, but the Doctor's views, or yours, are not relevant here at the moment. Just tell us what happened after that.

A. The next thing I knew about Mr. Hammond was the fact that he had gotten married the next day, that is, the day after I saw him. I found that out on the following Saturday, when I received his letter. Then on Sunday, shortly after one o'clock, Mr. Hammond telephoned and asked me to come to see him. He told me had been home since the previous Thursday, and that he had to see me. I tried to beg off by asking him to the party, but he told me he was ill. Then I called Mr. Bester and asked him to meet me at Mr. Hammond's place. I wanted to keep the visit short and somewhat, well, more tame than the last time I had seen him. Mr. Bester couldn't come and I went alone. I rang his bell but got no an-

swer. I rang the superintendent and got into the house. I rang his own doorbell several times before he answered. He opened the door but kept the latch-chain in place and asked me what I wanted. When I told him I had come because of his phone call, he insisted he hadn't called me and asked me who I was. Naturally, I didn't know what to make of this. I asked him if Maria was inside. For some reason he suddenly recognized me, or, at least, said he had suddenly recognized me, and let me in. Then he asked me where Maria was. I told him I didn't know but he kept asking me where she had gone. He appeared to be on the verge of hysterics, so to quiet him I pretended to recall Mr. Bester's telling me that Maria had said something about visiting them that afternoon. He immediately telephoned the Besters, and, as I expected, got no answer. I then told him that undoubtedly they had all gone for a walk, the afternoon being exceptionally fine. Mr. Wells, am I going into too great detail? You appear to be—

Q. Not at all, Mr. Reed. Please continue. I want the details.

A. He then asked me if I was going to the party that afternoon, and I said yes. Then he asked me whether the Besters weren't going too, and whether Maria mightn't have gone with them. He asked the question with such poorly disguised craftiness that I strongly opposed the idea. I told him that I knew very definitely that the Besters weren't going. Then I asked him what difference it would make if Maria had gone. He began to tremble and refused to answer. I asked him if his questioning had anything to do with what he had told me about the yards earlier. He still made no answer. When I repeated the question, phrasing it in another way, he suddenly flew into a rage and shouted at me. He told me it was none of my business, that I had not believed him when he told me what had happened in the yards, that he had no desire to tell me anything more, and that there was nothing to tell. He—

Q. These several statements are obviously contradictory. The contradictions, may I ask, were inherent in what he said, and not in the way you are repeating his statements?

A. Exactly. He contradicted himself over and over. Once he started to say: "If you had had the imagination to believe me," but he didn't finish. Finally I said I did believe him. He looked at me and then tried to punch me. I grabbed his hands and sat him down. He kept struggling and shouting at me, calling me all sorts of names. When I saw there was no sense staying any longer—at least that was what I decided—I left. Even when I went to the door he ran after me and tried to kick me.

Q. And that was the end of your visit with him?

A. Yes.

Q. Where did you go when you left Mr. Hammond?

A. I went to the party at the yards.

Q. Did you see Mrs. Hammond there?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you tell her of your visit with her husband?

A. Yes, but I didn't tell her much. I said I had dropped in on him and that he had appeared to be quite worried at her absence.

Q. What did she say to that?

A. She asked me several questions about him, how he was and so on. I felt she would have been greatly embarrassed if I appeared to be aware of her husband's condition—

MR. O'DAY. Your Honor, I object to this witness using the word "condition" in this context and ask that it be

stricken from the record. No condition has been established except in the mind of the witness.

MR. REED. Your Honor, I had no intention of using the word "condition" except to describe Mr. Hammond as I left him. I mean nothing by it that is not stated in what I have already said. I mean nothing more by it than that.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. I will permit the witness's testimony to stand, and I call the jury's attention to the witness's qualification of the word as he employed it.

MR. O'DAY. Exception.

MR. WELLS. You may continue now, Mr. Reed.

A. I have very little more to say. I was saying that because I did not wish to embarrass Mrs. Hammond, I said nothing about the way he had acted while I was with him. That's about all, I think. I don't recall speaking to her again.

MR. WELLS. Your witness, Mr. O'Day.



(EXCERPT FROM THE TESTIMONY OF DAVID V. REED, DEFENSE WITNESS, ON CROSS EXAMINATION BY DISTRICT ATTORNEY MALCOLM O'DAY)

Q. Mr. Reed, I will leave the question of this letter which Mr. Hammond wrote you and I will turn my attention to this matter of the story which you claim Mr. Hammond told you. You have testified that you would not say you were Mr. Hammond's best friend. You have testified that you were not surprised when Mr. Hammond singled you out as the one recipient of his announcement of his marriage, in spite of the fact that you were not his best friend. Can you think of any reason why he also singled you cut as the recipient of this story which you claim he told you?

A. I have a theory, if you care to listen to it.

Q. I have a great interest in all your theories, Mr. Reed.

A. Thank you. I think Mr. Hammond came to me because he seemed to feel, as he said, that I was someone accustomed to dealing with fantastic events. Of course, he was confusing—that is, he seemed to think that because I wrote fantasies that I would be the one to hear such a story, and that I might believe him. I think of all the writers he knew of whom he might think the same, I was closest to him. But after the disastrous—if I may use the word—way that evening turned out, after I went for a doctor, he felt he owed me a letter or some slight apology. As he wrote, he sent me the announcement because he felt I had been kind to him and because I might be concerned about him.

Q. That's very interesting, I'm sure. Have you any more theories, sir?

A. Yes, but you'd probably have it removed from the record.

Q. You think so? Well, then, what other theories, may I ask?

A. I have a theory that Mr. Hammond was insane all that time.

Q. And you like to have your theories proven correct, do you not?

A. I'd say, rather, that I like to have a correct theory proven.

Q. If a theory is proven, that makes it correct, doesn't it?

A. Yes.

Q. So you set yourself the task of proving your theory, Mr. Reed? You decided that Mr. Hammond was insane, so you came to this courtroom determined to prove it, no matter what you had to say to prove it?

A. I don't think you're being fair or accurate, Mr. O'Day. The things I have said here, the conversations I have repeated and the actions I described, are what made me decide he was insane.

Q. Well, Mr. Reed, I have no intention of asking that your remarks and theories be stricken from the record. I want the record to show that you are a great theorizer and that you came to court prepared with theories, and that you backed them up with your testimony.

A. I must repeat that you are still putting the cart before the horse—

Q. I wouldn't put this cart and what it contains before a jackass. Even a jackass would have more sense than to believe a word of it.

A. I take it then that you don't believe a word of it.

Q. Mr. Reed, I will thank you to spare me your insolence. I will remind you that I represent the State of New York.

A. I'm sorry.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. Exactly what I said.

Q. Very well, I will accept your apology. Returning to your theory for a moment, for the sake of the record, I would like to ask you if you consider yourself qualified to pass an opinion on insanity.

A. I do not so consider myself.

Q. And you admit that your opinion is worthless?

A. I admit that my opinion cannot be considered as expert opinion.

Q. On the question of insanity?

A. On the question of insanity.

Q. But you are an expert at inventing fantastic stories?

A. I don't know how expert I am. I sell what I write.

Q. Can you give us the plots of say, two or three stories you wrote?

A. I suppose I could, but it would take time and—

Q. Since Mr. Wells took the court's time to allow you to tell a story, I think we have time to listen to some others. The details are not important. A sample outline or two will do.

MR. WELLS. Your Honor, it seems to me that Mr. O'Day is taking undue advantage of his position to harass the witness. I beg the Court's protection for Mr. Reed.

Mr. O'Day. If it please the Court, I am trying to establish that the witness is a gifted inventor of fantastic stories, and to relate this ability to the testimony he has given here.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. I really don't think Mr. Reed objects particularly?

MR. REED. I have no objection, your Honor.

MR. O'DAY. All right then.

A. There is a story of mine currently on the stands in *Amazing Stories*, called, "Death Plays A Game." It deals with a spaceship from an imaginary planet called Lindar. This ship is a gambling ship. The idea behind the story is that Lindar needs slave labor to work its mines, and gets slaves by maneuvering people to gamble for their freedom. It gets quite complicated. Shall I go on?

Q. I don't think that will be necessary. Instead I'd rather you told us about a story you had in the October issue of the same magazine, titled, "The World Of Miracles."

A. That story deals with a world in another dimension. Its—

Q. Excuse me. What does that mean?

A. I haven't the faintest idea.

Q. You mean you write about things you don't understand?

A. I'm afraid I must answer yes.

Q. You amaze me, Mr. Reed. Please continue.

A. Well, the inhabitants of this other

world manage to bring two humans through the dimensional barrier, and through trickery they present their world as a miraculous place. They promise to duplicate their happiness in our dimension. They give these two men a drug, which, when dropped into water of our world, will enable them to come through. The two men they brought were drunk, and when they returned to our world, they accidentally destroy this drug. It then turns out that the world of miracles was actually barren and dying. Its inhabitants were meat eaters and were looking forward to devouring all of us once they got here.

Q. Dear me.

A. You needn't worry, Mr. O'Day. The drug was destroyed.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. I caution the courtroom against another outbreak.

Q. I think these two samples amply demonstrate that you are accustomed to thinking along lines which are, shall we say, unusual? There are not many people you can name who are practitioners of your special literary art, are there?

A. Well, I'm hardly a specialist. I've written a good many other kinds of stories. But at that party on the Sunday of August 10th, there were at least half a dozen experts in this field. Offhand, I recall Manly Wade Wellman, John Broome, David Wright O'Brien, Henry Kuttner, Craig Ellis and others.

Q. You would not, I take it, classify Mr. Hammond among these experts?

A. I would not.

Q. Because Mr. Hammond never wrote fantastic stories?

A. Not to my knowledge.

Q. As far as you know, did he ever read fantastic stories?

A. I don't think I am qualified to answer that. I was not intimately acquainted with his choice of reading matter.

Q. You are qualified to answer any question that asks you to respond only to the extent of what you know. I ask you again, whether, as far as you know, Mr. Hammond ever read such stories?

A. As far as I know, he didn't.

Q. Did you ever hear him discuss such stories?

A. No.

Q. Did you ever hear anyone else say anything which might lead you to think he had any familiarity with such stories?

A. No.

Q. But you claim he told you this fantastic story?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think it contains the elements for a salable fantastic story?

A. More or less. It depends on how it's handled, I think.

Q. In other words, the idea itself is quite professional?

A. I'm not sure I know what you mean.

Q. I mean that it contains enough of an idea, or ideas, and complications, to make a salable story for a professional expert in the field.

A. I can answer that best by saying again that the experts in this field are determined not so much by their ideas as by their handling of—

Q. Surely you don't think any writer could turn to this field? Would he not need a certain minimum proficiency in getting these ideas?

A. Well, yes.

Q. And this story demonstrates such a proficiency, does it not?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. Did you ever write a story resembling the one you claim he told you?

A. No.

Q. There was nothing familiar about it?

A. There were familiar elements in

it. For instance, the telepathic powers which he claimed for the monster.

Q. What other talents did it have?

A. It could quote from Milton and Shakespeare.

MR. JUSTICE REVERE. Silence in the court. Mr. Reed, I must caution you against answering the questions of the District Attorney with such levity. This court is no place for a display of wit.

MR. REED. Your Honor, I seriously meant what I said.

Q. You mean Mr. Hammond told you this monster quoted Shakespeare?

A. That's exactly what I mean. He told me he hadn't known they were quotations when I identified them as such. All he knew, he said, was that he had heard them from the monster. Perhaps I should add, now that I think of it, that he didn't actually refer to it as a monster. He called it a thing. It was my idea to call it a metal monster.

Q. Why was that?

A. Well, I kept thinking he was outlining a story idea, and if I'd written it as a story I'd have called it a metal monster.

Q. And how much more of this story is actually yours?

A. Nothing.

Q. Absolutely nothing?

A. Absolutely nothing.

Q. Then you mean to tell us, Mr. Reed, that the defendant, Mr. Hammond, who to your knowledge never wrote, read, or discussed such stories, came to you and told you a story worthy of the proficiency of an expert at inventing them?

A. That appears to be the case.

Q. That actually was the case, you maintain?

A. Yes.

Q. How do you account for it?

A. Must I account for it?

Q. Can you account for it?

A. No.

Q. Neither can I, Mr. Reed, and I doubt whether anyone else here can. I have no further questions, sir. You are excused.



SHE must have said something. She would not have left without telling me something but I do not remember it. Suddenly it was Sunday and Maria was not with me. She would not have told me she was going to the party. Suddenly it was Sunday and I was alone.

Then Reed came.

Why should he have said I had telephoned him if I hadn't? I didn't remember it then and I don't now. I thought there was no way he could have known I was back in the city unless Jim had told him. Maria would not have told him. I thought perhaps Maria had asked him to come because she wanted to go to the yards. Did I think of this then, or do I think so now? I keep confusing what I knew then with what I knew just a few hours later. There must be a way to remember. When Reed comes later he may be able to help me. That was all the same Sunday, the Sunday it all happened. He said I had asked him to come. And tonight, after all this time, to ask him if he knew Maria had gone to the yards? Well, yes, why not tell me? Why should he hold back? Certainly he doesn't think there's anything to it. He must agree with Schumer. Schumer tells him everything and they must agree. Now everyone agrees there was never anything to it. As a matter of fact, isn't Reed bringing the final bit of evidence that Schumer is right?

I threw him out. I was ill. The

whole thing is understandable now. It was all because I was ill. He kept asking me questions and I thought he knew where Maria was. I was worried about her. I thought

Well, there has to be a contradiction, the way Schumer says. If I was ill then and I am not now, naturally everything I remember must be colored by the illness of that time. Schumer says that if a man wore colored glasses at a time when he viewed a certain scene, if he never saw that scene again without the glasses, he would always remember it as something that

He says that unless this man realizes he was wearing these odd glasses, he cannot adjust to reality. So he is teaching me to recognize reality once more, to perceive the difference between the real and the colored memory, between what must have been and what I thought once was. He says one cannot continue to live in the world unless one understands it. I have said the same thing in another way, which makes him angry since it implies a continuation. I have said I could not continue to believe what I did and live.

So, all these things are not true and never were. This might be called the memoirs of an hallucinosis. Diary of a delusion. The clinical history of the patient, supplied by himself. Which probably partly accounts for Schumer's anxiety that I finish it. It may have a larger usefulness to him, but it has an invaluable, if limited and inverted, use for me, for if I believed the things in it I could not write them. I would dread Reed's coming tonight. Isn't he bringing me the final test? And if Schumer suspected that was what I considered it, I doubt if he would share my eagerness.



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

THESE passages introduce an introspective lucidity hardly paralleled in the manuscript, and what is perhaps the best indication that Hammond understood what was going on around him and inside him, and that he consciously fought to adopt Schumer's attitude. He contrasts the rare clarity of his recollections, at this point, with what Schumer has told him, and he cannot wholly accept the view that ". . . everything (he remembers) must be colored by the illness of that time . . ."—D. V. R.



It was evening when Maria returned. She came in so quietly I did not hear her. I accidentally looked up and there she was, standing over me as I lay on the couch. There was a single lamp lit near me and the light threw strangely soft shadows on her face. Her features were cast in immobility, but there was no rest, no repose in them. It was as if a human had been caught during the moments of transition that were changing the being into a statue. Her breathing was shallow and audible, and each exhalation was a rapid, fluttering sound. So she stood, stiff and silent, looking down at me.

How well I seem to remember all this. Yet I must not accept the validity of these distinctly recalled sounds and movements and indelibly etched, unimportant details of that instant? That was not meant to be a question when I began to write it. The catalyst of doubt still operates. It proves what Schumer said—that no one but I, eventually, can resolve whether or not it is a question. There should not be long to wait now. It is twenty past seven.

All this—my first glimpse of Maria returned, my sudden notice of the heavy package she held close to her, my feel-

ing that she hardly saw me at all through those unaccountably opaque eyes—all this was the reaction of a fraction of an instant. In that instant, as I jumped up, a numbing fear seized me. I could not yet have understood, but somehow within me was the prescience of the final descent of an incredible and tragic doom, in the shadow of which I had lived so long.

Then how am I to tell myself that these memories are false, that I have created them? What is there to say? That I had little need for the questions, the crying, the wild grief with which I occupied her last hour? And, finally, to confess that most of that hour is as vague as it has always been? What is there to say?

For a little while she was still able to speak, and though, in my ignorance I tried to silence her, she fought to force the whisper through her twisted lips. She had gone to the yards where I had told her I had seen the body of Kathy Gray, and she had found it. There Jim had followed her, and there the Thing had taken her life as it had taken Kathy's. And she came home, bringing with her the box Jim had given her.

And all that remained of this semblance of life that had been lent to her was to end when she opened the box. . . .

So much I remember and little more. There are dim recollections of her uncomprehending terror as she pleaded for my promise not to go to the yards, of last words that may have been a prayer. I think she asked me to kiss her. Perhaps I did. Sometimes I have remembered the box pressing against me as I leaned forward, sometimes I have felt once more the touch of lips already cold. But I do not trust these fleeting, imperfect images which my brain has crusted with horror, for all this was after I had opened the box—opened it, as I thought, to fight the then visible death that had been so patient before it claimed her—and after that. . . .

Sometimes in these last weeks as the shadows lifted, I have thought I remembered the way she looked at the last. I have seen again the pallid, weary face, the fire dying in sightless eyes, the small blue marks that ringed her throat, choking off her last soft breath. A room, quiet and dim as this one, whirling faster and faster, then streets and people and the box wet in my hands, and pavements reflecting light as the rain came down, the heavens crashing open. No word of goodbye. The streets grew empty, the spinning lights became hidden under a vast, grey sheet. But no word of goodbye.

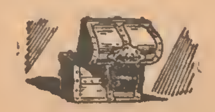
I have never remembered what was in the box.

COINCIDENTALLY enough, just as I think of Schumer, he knocks at my door. In a moment, Schumer. You have won your battle. I read and read again these words and am confounded by their unreality. You have found the box, but it will win your battle and you know it. The wonder of it is that there ever was a box. And if there was not, you would have managed to provide one. We understand each other, Schumer. You have a box and you wait for my surrender. You do not expect it but I am ready to offer it.

And now to what world do you lead me? You take me from this one of nightmare, the prison of my own mind, and free me. And now I will be free to wander in search of answers that only my world supplied so long? You will teach me to understand this world, but how will you explain my loneliness? What will you tell me of Maria? What do your promises mean when they say that my returning strength will supply the answers? What have you to tell me that needs my strength? In a mo-

ment now. Reed and you are waiting. I understand, but it's not easy to leave this prison of memories. False as they are, they are all I have now. They are all that remains of the life that was mine and Maria's.

Now hardly anything remains to be told. I will not invade your precinct. I will say nothing you think you know —what was in my mind that night has been, and remains, yours to determine. Let what has been in my heart for so long remain mine a moment longer while I finish. Then I will find the strength to accept the loneliness you offer.



(EXCERPT FROM THE NEW YORK POST, AUGUST 11, 1941, PAGE 3, CITY EDITION.)

Elliot Hammond Transferred from Injured Ward for Psychiatrist's Examination; Under Heavy Guard

ELLIOT HAMMOND, ACCUSED "triple-killer" who was taken by the police shortly before noon as he sat beside the body of the woman he had married and then strangled, was admitted to the Bellevue Psychiatric Ward at four o'clock today. His superficial wounds, believed to be the results of concussion incurred from the dynamite blast he set off late last night in the waterfront yards of the Acme Reclaiming Co., did not save him from some three hours of grilling. The killer took it stoically, never altering his blank expression. Finally, at the suggestion of District Attorney Malcolm O'Day, he was sent to psychiatrists for a complete examination.

Police officials are quickly gathering the evidence of what was declared to be the most horrible crime in decades of city history. Deputy Inspector Vern said that the coroner's report conclusively showed that Hammond choked his wife to death before he made his way to the yards where he blew up his best friend, James Shilling, author of *The Silent Room*, and Miss Jean Lowell, described by her friends as Shilling's fiancee.

Behind this bare tale of incredible butchery, said Inspector Vern, lay a complex and sordid story of jealousy and hatred that reached its bloody climax last night . . .



(HEADLINE AND STORY EXCERPTS FROM THE NEW YORK WORLD, AUGUST 13, 1941.)

FIND THIRD BODY IN ACME SCRAPYARD!

Beautiful Model, 20, Missing 5 Days, Found by Police on Site of Dynamite Murders; Buried Beneath Scrap Iron. Unexploded Fuses Planted Near Body Provides Link to Previous Murders

THE CASE AGAINST "TRIPLE-KILLER" Elliot Hammond was augmented this morning when police experts of the Bomb Squad discovered the body of Katherine Gray less than a hundred yards from the site of two of his other murders. Police Headquarters was thrown into confusion a few moments after the discovery was telephoned in. Until this morning's gruesome find, the lovely 20 year-old photographers' model had been listed as missing since the morning of August 8th, when her room-mate, Ann Packard, of 224 High Blvd., reported to the police that Katherine Gray had not returned from a dinner date of the previous evening.

According to Deputy Inspector Vern, in charge of investigation of the Hammond case, the new murder was plainly linked to the others. As in the case of Maria Denisov, two-day dancer bride of the killer, death was attributed to strangulation. According to the coroner's report, Katherine Gray had been dead at least four or five days. Since Hammond was seen in Greenwich Village at four-thirty A.M. on August 8th, the killing was placed between that hour and six P.M. of August 7th, when her room-mate last saw Katherine Gray. The identity of the witness who placed Hammond for the police was not revealed, but a high police official was quoted as saying, "We know enough about his movements that night to hang him once for each murder."

It was revealed that immediately after the dynamite killings on Sunday, the Police Department's dynamite experts, headed by Lt. Lawrence Swift, were called in. It was quickly found that not all the dynamite stolen from company shacks had been accounted for. Estimating the force of the explosions, Lt. Swift felt that at least three cartridges were missing, and a painstaking search of the hundreds of acres of swampland, piled high with scrap, was initiated.

The dynamite, said Lt. Swift, was used by company experts to blast apart the huge mountains of metal which frequently became



. . . then streets, rain, pavements reflecting light, the box wet in my hands . . .

wedged in masses too heavy for cranes to handle.

Ironically enough, detectives operating independently under direction of the Missing Persons Bureau had cut across the track of the Homicide Squad by last night. Questioning of Katherine Gray's friends had provided detectives with a list of her many admirers, and among these was found Mr. Craig Ellis, a writer. Mr. Ellis mentioned the yards of the Acme Co. among the places he had taken the missing girl.



(EXCERPTS FROM THE NEW YORK POST, AUGUST 14, 1941, PAGE 3, CITY EDITION.)

HAMMOND STILL WON'T TALK: PSYCHIATRISTS DISAGREE

"He'll Stand Trial," Says District Attorney O'Day

Angered by leaks from the closely guarded Bellevue Observation Ward, District Attorney O'Day dismissed rumors that eminent psychiatrists were locked in disagreement on the question of the "triple-killer's" sanity. Questioned by reporters in a press conference this afternoon, the D.A. said he had but one word to characterize "this malicious gossip."

The word, said Mr. O'Day, is: "Hogwash!" He added: "And you can quote me on this too. If Elliot Hammond is found to have been insane, or is insane, he will be dealt with according to the law, which protects homicidal maniacs. But no one is going to put over any plea of insanity that is not backed one hundred percent by experts. The people are sick and tired of seeing an endless procession of murderers walking out scot free because some quack medic was confused enough to lend his name to a plea of insanity. Silence is no proof of insanity. Especially in Hammond's case, it is proof, and definite proof, of complete sanity. He knows the minute he opens his mouth, he will be discovered as a fraud. And frauds are still liable to execution."



(EXCERPT FROM THE NEW YORK WORLD, AUGUST 21, 1941, PAGE 1, CITY EDITION.)

HAMMOND INDICTED

Grand Jury Holds Him for Murders on Three Counts Refuses to Indict on Killing of Katherine Gray. "Satisfied," Says D.A. "He Only Has to Be Electrocuted Once." Will Seek Early Trial Date



WE HAD planned, Jim and I, to destroy the Thing after everyone had gone. Jim had arranged everything. I was only to take my appointed place in the yards, where he had set the detonators, close enough to the piers to be able to see him.

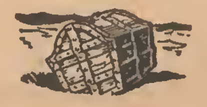
He would come out at the appointed hour and call to me that he was out of the dangerous area. Then I would set off the dynamite he had taken from the shack. The same blast would destroy poor Kathy's body. And when the police came, we would have our story: the party, wilder than most; someone (question them all and probe beneath their denials) had stolen the dynamite—a horrible, bloodcurdling, drunken prank, say what you will—no one had been hurt. Investigate, prosecute for criminal negligence. The Thing and the evidence of what it had done to Kathy would be gone forever.

If it worked, Jim had said. There could be no assurance that it would. That was the gamble we were to take, but I alone took it and I alone lost it. It was already lost for Jim, it was already out of his hands—because Jim didn't know I was going to blow him up with it.

By the time I got there I didn't have to wait. Everyone had gone because of the rain. He was alone. I called to him and waited only until he appeared at the door.

So now, Schumer, I have provided at least one answer for your world, to stand beside my question. I have told you what happened to Kathy Gray when she disappeared from your logical world, when all trace of her was lost one night. And now you understand my question, the progenitor of all my questions. For I do not know if the Thing was destroyed. You have undermined my memory. I cannot unravel the tangled skeins of half-dreams; I cannot reconcile your talks about my imagination and its disorders with the dim recollection of a sentence that was passed on me, as it was passed on Maria.

A moment more, Schumer, hammering on my door now, before you tell me I do not remember the way the houseboat lifted in a great orange blaze that tore the night apart. There is not long to wait before



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

THE Hammond manuscript ends here. According to Schumer, when Hammond refused to open the door, he used a pass key and entered the room. But the story does not end with the manuscript. I continue this collection as I started, with a few additional details that give this strange tale its third—(or fourth?)—dimension. And then, if you have borne with me so far, I will intrude long enough to put some questions to you.—D. V. R.



(EXCERPT FROM THE NEW YORK POST, NOVEMBER 20, 1941, PAGE 3, CITY EDITION.)

PSYCHIATRISTS BATTLE ON STAND

Specialists Called by Defense Contradict Prosecution's Case as Dr. Schumer Is Star Witness. Case to Jury Monday

AS THE TRIAL OF Elliot Hammond neared its end this afternoon, it reached the thrilling climax predicted weeks ago as the defense paraded a phalanx of psychiatric experts to the stand in an all-out effort to save Hammond's life. One after another, the psychiatrists told the jury the same thing—that they believed Hammond had been insane at the time the murders were committed, and that he is insane today. Nor was this careful phrasing lost on District Attorney O'Day, who immediately noticed that the learned doctors said nothing about Hammond committting the murders. This was eloquent testimony indeed, especially to the coaching of Defense Chief Wells who has never conceded that Hammond is a murderer. The wily Wells conceded nothing today: his clear questions were concerned only with diagnoses of Hammond's mental state.

Notable even in today's array was Professor Leopold Schumer, who identified himself on the stand as "the celebrated Schumer." It was the opinion of seasoned trial veterans that Schumer's testimony struck a vital blow for the defense, aimed squarely at one of the prosecution's favorite points—namely, that Wells has not and will not bring Hammond to the stand. Speaking in a high-pitched voice flavored with a Viennese accent and studded with French idioms, Dr. Schumer answered every question thoughtfully, avoiding as much as possible technical terminology. Indeed, the Doctor frequently offered explanations in terms of metaphor which were unusually effective. Replying to Mr. Wells' question as to whether Hammond might profitably be brought to the stand, he said:

"To testify? But he does not speak. Look at him sitting there so quietly. He cannot speak. He fears to speak. He is like a soldier who has been moving on a dark battlefield, when suddenly the enemy has on him turned a dazzling light. The soldier on the battlefield who is confronted by such light, what does he do? Absolutely nothing. He motionless remains. He knows to move is to invite death. He hopes so to blend with the environment, the protection of darkness everywhere around him. So in the case of Mr. Hammond. He has suffered a great shock, like the sudden light, *n'est-pas?* He does not say a word, but not only this, he does not move, he does not eat. He is a man dead *sous tous les rapports*. Of what happens around him he understands only the light, and to that alone he adjusts. The rest of the world has no meaning for him. Perhaps one day, with care, with fortune, he may speak again. But now? It is more sensible to bring here one of the dummies from a tailor shop. . . ."

This was one of the few occasions during the trial that Hammond's physical presence in the court room had been mentioned. For

the most part, Defense Attorney Wells has completely ignored the defendant, as if to illustrate the defense contention that Hammond is incapable of thought or action. Needless to say, Hammond has never given any sign of reacting to his surroundings. Today, as always, he sat stony-faced, unmoving, impassive. It was evident, nevertheless, that the prosecution's avoidance of comment is likewise the result of a policy—a policy which intends to let the defense overplay its hand—or so it hopes.

In his turn, District Attorney O'Day lost no time seizing what he considered a Schumer-presented opportunity to blast the defense case. How, he asked the learned Doctor, could a man in such a condition engineer a complex murder? After interminable objections the question was re-worded to: "Could a man in such condition engineer a complex murder?" Though with this question O'Day sought to contradict previously offered opinions that Hammond was insane at the time of the murder, he was also flanking the defense contention that Hammond is insane today.

But the Doctor was not to be trapped. He shook his head patiently and replied, "But this condition is not the same. It remains not statis. Today he is so, but yesterday, when this condition was in the formative state, when underneath was boiling the pot, the currents *le dessous des cartes*, was many things possible. The man today is the product of the man yesterday. When these two men are not the same, often the today man tells us what happened to the yesterday man. What has happened to Mr. Hammond since the murder? He was arrested and of murder accused. Is this something capable to give such a profound shock to a man who plans a murder? No, it is not. We do not find histories of murderers who are shocked by being caught. But what do we have here? A state resembling that of narcolepsy. Perhaps a fugue, aphonia, anasthesia sometimes visual, sometimes anorexia—a complete catalogue of a psychasthenic or of the hysterical type. It is hard to comprehend such cases all at once, but some things we know instantaneously.

"The shock was there already but it did not manifest itself until it was understood. We are not shocked by things we do not understand. Even if the realization of a murder is what shocks the man, it must be that he did not murder with an understanding of what he was doing. So here. Something, perhaps many thing together, has shocked the man. I do not say what, because I do not know. But I say this man did not understand what he did *before* he was in this condition today. The condition now is a development, a result, the *commencement de la fin.*"

Needless to say, this speech was not unaccompanied by a barrage of objections, this time from Mr. O'Day. The Doctor was allowed to finish only because Judge Revere insisted the jury had a right to listen to a requested answer, for its own information if not for Mr. O'Day's. As for the District Attorney's intimations that the noted psychiatrist had been fooled by Hammond, Dr. Schumer said: "I am a doctor thirty-seven years, a professor twenty-two. There have many books been published in that time. They all tell you Schumer is a great man. Sometimes a diagnosis, a hair difference, yes. To fool me so? Impossible. This man sitting here has not fooled me. The doctor who says anything else fools you, my dear sir. . . ."



(EXCERPT FROM THE FINAL ADDRESS TO THE JURY BY DISTRICT ATTORNEY O'DAY.)

". . . the strategy of the defense counsel, this strategy of oversimplification, of ignoring the multitude of facts, is something I welcome most heartily. The defense has insistently fought every point in the State's case, it has struggled against the forging of every link in the inexorable chain of evidence which proves the defendant's guilt. And why? To build a counter-case, perhaps? No. To offer a different interpretation, perhaps? No. Why then has it fought so stubbornly? I say to you that it has fought because its policy was, from the start, to spread confusion, and that alone.

"For it has made no use of any of the points it attempted to set up against the State's case. Now that the trial itself is over, we have gained a perspective with which we can review it. We know that no case has been offered in opposition to, or as a substitute for, the State's case. It is perfectly clear now that the plan to plead the defendant's insanity was the sum and substance of the defense case. Yet throughout the trial, the defense attacked and insulted and reviled witnesses whose function, in some instances, was no more important than to establish the time of day. . . .

"These obstructionist tactics shed a brilliant light on the defense's dilemma. The defense knew the defendant's guilt could be proved in a case prepared step by step, logically linked all the way. It had too little confidence in its intended plea of insanity to allow the State to proceed unhampered. It had nothing with which to fight back, so it fought to becloud the issue and befuddle the jury, in the hope that when it finally did offer its one plea, that it alone would remain the issue.

"That is the strategy of over-simplification. It has failed because the facts cannot be dismissed, because they prove that the one grounds of the defense is untenable—because they overwhelm the false contention that Elliot Hammond did not know that he was doing wrong when he killed his wife, his best friend, and his one love. The facts prove that Hammond fully understood everything he did, and understood the penalty for what he did, and because of that he planned his murders carefully.

"The State now claims that penalty. The State demands that Hammond forfeit his life for the crime of murder. It is not the function of the State to exact this penalty if there is any reason to accept the view that Hammond was insane at the time of the murders, or is now insane. I say to you that I would not be here now as the prosecuting attorney if I could accept even a fraction of the defense's contention. I am here now because the facts compel me to be here, because the facts are such that the State's view is the only one which can be maintained. That is why I seek the execution of Elliot Hammond, the most cold-blooded killer I have encountered in all my experience.

"And what are these facts? Let us review them.

"We have shown that Elliot Hammond was in love with Jean Lowell for many years. We know that this love was unrequited, but that it was nevertheless strong enough to endure. Hammond saw Jean Lowell frequently and she went with him because of the friendship she bore him. There was nothing between them except this friendship, but after years of hoping, years in which no other man came between Hammond and his hopes, he began to feel that Jean belonged to him.

"And then one day Hammond took Jean along when he went to visit his old friend, Jim Schilling. If we believe that matches are made in Heaven, we believe that this meeting between Jean and Jim was inevitable. But no matter. It was evident from the very beginning that these two had found each other, that from the moment they met they knew they belonged to each other. It was evident to everyone there, including Hammond. And from that day on he writhed in the grip of a jealousy he was unable to control. We have shown that Hammond argued with Jim that very afternoon, argued with him on the flimsiest matter. On the surface he was arguing about a recording, but it could have been anything else, either more or less important. That argument was not because of the record—it was a reflection of the bitterness, the unreasoning, uncontrolled jealousy that flared up within Hammond.

"And then Hammond went for a walk with Jean. He took her into the yards and spoke to her. They were gone for half an hour. We do not know what happened between them, but we know what happened later. Common sense fills the gap for us. Suddenly the others at the houseboat heard Hammond calling her. Jim and two others got lanterns and went to find her. They found her almost immediately—she was just a few feet away from Hammond. Why

hadn't she answered Hammond's cries? *Because she had run away from him.* He had pleaded with her, thrown himself at her feet, and finally, when he realized that nothing could avail him, he had lost all control. The fury that was later to manifest itself in her death was first seen by Jean that evening.



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

THE italics and paragraphing are mine. I have tried to indicate where District Attorney O'Day emphasized points.—D. V. R.



"Hammond was silent and preoccupied for the rest of the evening, but few of those present had not guessed what had happened. A few days later Hammond was seen arguing with Jim in a restaurant. He stopped seeing Jean. His health began to deteriorate. His work suffered. He was a man possessed. He refused to accept what Heaven or Fate had ordained. It was not Jean's fault, or Jim's, that they were madly in love. It was something that happens every day to people, but when it happened to Elliot Hammond, it destroyed his reason.

"Yes, I say it destroyed his reason. Not the reason which understands what is right and what is wrong, but the reason which accepts what life brings. In everything he later did, Hammond showed that he had not lost the power to make the distinction between right and wrong. He had the faculties—but what had been destroyed was his will to abide by what he knew was right. He was filled with hatred. His soul and his mind was corroded by a powerful acid, by a jealousy which he would not fight against. Corroded as it was, his mind still functioned. He began to plan Jim's undoing. He began to plan murder.

"From the beginning he saw the dangerous position in which he would find himself if Jim was murdered. He knew he would be suspect number one. The first thing he had to do was to erase the evidences of his motive. The second thing he had to do was to start manufacturing other evidence, in case of a slip-up somewhere—evidence he could fall back on later if something went wrong with his plan. He did both, cunningly.

"TO ERASE his motive, he suddenly married Maria Denisov. He had known Maria for a long time. He had known her for much of the time he was hopelessly in love with Jean Lowell. During that time he had not once manifested any evidence of affection for Maria. He seldom went with her. He met her mostly in the company of mutual friends. He was not in love with her. Yet he married her suddenly. He visited his friend Reed one night, left there late that night, and was married the next day. Why?

"Because his marriage to Maria offered material evidence that he was no longer interested in Jean Lowell or in what she did. He married Maria to remove suspicion from himself, if suspicion should fall on him as a result of what he was soon to do. So he went away with her for two days. That was all the time he needed. During that time he wrote his friend Reed a letter telling him how happy he was. That was another link in his proof that he had lost interest in Jean.

"But why did he choose Reed? We have shown that the two were not at all

intimate friends. Why should he single out Reed as the recipient of his confidence?

"Because Reed was part of his secondary plan—the plan to manufacture evidence in case anything went wrong.

"I believe that Hammond did visit Reed on the night of August 5th. I believe that Hammond told Reed things designed to make Reed wonder if his friend was entirely sane. But I do not believe, nor do I think anyone can believe, the story which Reed offered in testimony. I think it is absolutely clear that the story sounds entirely too much like the manufactured fantasies which Reed customarily sells to magazines. I think it is plain to see that from Reed's sometimes fumbling, sometimes brazen assertions, that the story is false. And I think the reasons for this are not too difficult to understand.

"The main thing is that, from what Hammond said that night, Reed felt he had good reason to doubt his friend's sanity. Since then he convinced himself his friend was insane. So, instead of telling the story Hammond told him, whatever it was, Reed has substituted one which he considers far more effective, and more capable of proving what he considers to be the truth. Reed's intentions are honorable, but he is nevertheless a liar and a dangerous one. But if we understand what his motives are, we understand how well Hammond succeeded in fooling him, and thus we render his perjured testimony harmless.

"Because if nothing happened to place suspicion on Hammond, he saw to it that the incident would not prove too important. He left Reed that night before a doctor could examine him. He had already planted the seed. There was no need to cultivate it unless later events made it imperative.

"So he left. The next day he married Maria Denisov. The day after that he wrote Reed a letter emphasizing his happiness. That done, he took his bride of thirty hours home. He had no reason to extend a honeymoon with a woman he did not love, a woman, moreover, who in thirty hours of marriage had already discovered that her husband did not love her, a woman, who because of this, was plunged into deepest misery and sorrow.

"HE LEFT home that night with the intention of murdering Jim Shilling. He had undoubtedly worked out some plan which he felt would give him an excellent chance of surviving the deed. On his way he stopped in to get a few drinks to bolster his courage. Evidently he needed a lot of courage, because he arrived at the yards in an intoxicated state. Or perhaps it was part of his plan to be seen drunk—perhaps the accident which he had planned for his friend Jim was going to be partly explained by the fact that he was drunk. Unfortunately, when he got to the houseboat he found a visitor had preceded him.

"That visitor was Katherine Gray, a lovely young girl who made a living by posing for advertisements. She was not only beautiful but intelligent and gifted. She wrote poetry. She had met Jim Shilling through a friend of hers, a Mr. Craig Ellis. Undoubtedly she sought Jim's guidance in writing. Jim was a famous writer, author of "The Silent Room," a poet himself. They had had, we can surmise, an innocent dinner engagement, and then came to Jim's home to discuss her work. There can be no other interpretation. Jim Shilling was head over heels, madly, in love with Jean Lowell. We can be sure that Jean knew of Katherine's presence there. The one who didn't know it, who didn't expect it, was Hammond.

"He found himself unable to carry out his plan because of the girl's presence. He waited until the girl was ready to leave, but he had no valid reason for remaining, especially since he made an ideal escort to take the girl home from that lonely place. And so he left with her, and in the next few moments—if indeed it had not occured to him earlier that night—he changed his plans. *He decided to kill Katherine Gray.*

"It is not given to ordinary people, people like you and I, to understand fully the workings of a murderer's mind, yet some things we can understand. We can understand the deep resentment against that poor girl that must have smouldered within him, the transference of hatred from Jim Shilling to her equally innocent head. We can understand these things, but since we do not know them as a *legal* certainty, Hammond is not on trial for that murder which he committed as surely as I stand here and know it in my heart of hearts, as surely as there is a God in Heaven who knows it. We cannot prove his motive, but we can understand it clearly enough, and we can prove that we understand it because of what else we know, because of what the murderer did later.

"Elliot Hammond killed Katherine Gray because he thought he might be able to pin the murder on Jim Shilling.

"He strangled her there in the swamps and left her body there. Then he tried to swim away, to leave the scene without having to go out of the yard gates. God only knows what he would have said later. We know that he couldn't swim out. The strong tide was going seaward that night and the yards extended too far. Finally he had to leave through the gates, but he waited until he thought he could make the dash unobserved. He waited until Mulvaney, the head watchman, was in his hut, and then he ran to the gates, not knowing that Mulvaney saw him.

"The next day Mulvaney told Jim what he had seen. Jim couldn't believe it. He knew, as he told Mulvaney and as Mulvaney told us, that Hammond had left half an hour after midnight with Katherine Gray. He could not believe that Hammond had left at three o'clock in the morning, alone, soaked to the skin. . . .

"BUT now I must pause a moment. For at this point we reach the testimony of a defense witness, a Mr. Thomas Stapley. Stapley's testimony is the only example of an attempt by the defense to contradict testimony by any State witness. Where the defense attacked State witnesses as its one weapon, where it maligned unbiased citizens and called them drunkards, liars, bums, ignoramuses as its means of refutation, in Stapley the defense actually produced a witness of its own.

"What was the function of this witness? It is to be found in Stapley's answer that he saw Katherine Gray alive at 5 A.M. on the morning of August 8th. That answer is intended to contradict, and does contradict, the meaning of the evidence supplied by Mrs. Mabel Bailey, a State witness who testified that she saw Hammond at Jean Lowell's door at 4:30 A.M. that same morning. The defense carefully pursued this point when Mrs. Bailey was asked to fix the time when she saw Hammond leave her building. He left, she said, at 4:45 A.M.

"What does this mean? It means that if Stapley actually saw Katherine Gray alive at 5 A.M. that Hammond could not be the murderer we know he is. But, you may ask, why should the defense bother to manage an alibi for a murder which is not at issue here?

Elliot Hammond is not being tried for the murder of Katherine Gray, is he? No, he is not. But the defense knew as well as the State that the story of these murders was *one and indivisible*—that the story went step by step, logically, to its unalterable conclusion.

"The attempt by the defense to prove Hammond innocent of a crime for which he is not on trial was actually an attack on the logic of the entire State's case! Understanding the close relationship of every element in this case, the defense sought to destroy the entire structure by attacking one small part of it! If Hammond did not kill Katherine Gray, the defense mutely inquires, who did? Was not Katherine Gray's body found near dynamite which was supposed to blow her up together with Jim Shilling and Jean Lowell? Does that not prove that the same murderer killed all three? And, having shown that Hammond could *not* have killed Katherine Gray, does that not show that he did *not* kill the other two?

"That was the intent of the defense in introducing Stapley to the stand, and that was why the State insisted on including aspects of the murder of Katherine Gray in its case against Hammond.

"And who is this Stapley? He is a man who tells tales which no one can substantiate. He claims to have voluntarily taken the blame for his friends, but the records show that he was fired for drunkenness. Then he disappeared. He went to work in Oregon. Why? Was it only a job that took him three thousand miles away from the scene of the crime, or was there a better reason? Was there something Stapley feared the police might discover? I do not pretend to know. The police have been working on this aspect of the case since Stapley testified. I think perhaps we shall have more to do with this fortunately discovered witness, who was safe in Oregon until he was persuaded to come east to offer his lying testimony. We are anxious to know whether he came merely for his expense money, and how much money that will add up to. But I think we can safely dismiss Stapley and his testimony when it conflicts with that of a man like Mulvaney, an old and trusted worker with an excellent record, and who remained to help the police as much as he could.

"And now we return to Hammond. He had strangled Katherine Gray and made his way out of the yards. He then went to the house where Jean Lowell lived. He tried to get into her apartment but she wouldn't let him in. He told her he had to talk to her about Jim, that he had seen Jim and Katherine Gray and that something terrible had happened. Nevertheless, because she feared him, she did not let him in and he left.

"What would he have told Jean if she had let him in? I fear we may never know, unless Hammond tells us. But from what we do know, we can well understand that he intended to further his plot against Jim, that he was ready with some kind of an eyewitness story which would result in the arrest of Jim Shilling for the murder of Katherine Gray. But Jean would not let him in, and Hammond began to realize that his plan was not going to be the easy thing he thought it was. He began to see new visions—police who wouldn't listen to him any more than Jean did—flaws he had not counted on. Suddenly he was sick. The visions made him deathly ill and afraid and he went home.

"WHEN he got home he found Maria's sister, Tamara, with her. Maria had sent for her and told her how her heart had been broken. Ta-

mara waited to tell Hammond that she was taking her sister away, that the marriage would be annulled. What did Hammond say to this? He told Tamara that if she didn't leave immediately that he would throw her out of the window. He took another drink and found the courage to threaten another murder that night. And we can well understand why.

"For here was Tamara Denisov saying that she was going to take away his carefully prepared proof that he had no interest left in Jean. If that happened he was worse off than ever. Unfortunately for his poor wife, she elected to remain with him. When Tamara left, she heard Hammond begin to scream. He was still screaming the next day, when Dr. Pryce answered Maria's call and came to see him. And if Tamara did not hear why he was screaming, Dr. Pryce did. He was screaming because his nerve was cracking, because he already saw himself caught, because he saw the beginning of the end. Dr. Schumer, the psychiatrist, said in French that his condition was a development and he used the words *"commencement de la fin"* which means the beginning of the end. But the end he saw was *his* end—the murderer's end. He was screaming the way condemned men scream when they are dragged to the electric chair at Ossining, the way he will scream when his turn arrives.

"So that same morning of August 8th, Maria sent for Dr. Pryce. He was too busy to come but she told him her husband had suffered a shock. What did she mean by that? Had Hammond hysterically told her what he had done the night before? We don't know as a certainty, but we do know that he had told her enough for her to guess the worst. She did not mention this shock again to Dr. Pryce, but when he was about to leave she started to say that there was something she had to tell him. She did not finish because Hammond began to shout again. What did he say?

"Dr. Pryce heard him. He said that his wife's life was not safe with him and that what had happened the night before would happen again. He told her to leave before it was too late and that he would face it alone.

"And there we have Hammond's confession of the murder of Katherine Gray.

"We have more than that. We have his prediction that he was going to kill his wife as well. He was insane then, but not in the way the defense would have you believe. He was insane with momentary remorse. He felt his blood running hot and feverish through him. He felt the killer in him unleashed and he *knew* what he was going to do. He told his wife he would kill her and he meant it. The plan was already forming in his mind.

"And now we must ask ourselves the question the defense has raised. We must ask ourselves whether Hammond was sane or not. When you ladies and gentlemen of the jury retire to consider a verdict, His Honor, Judge Revere, will instruct you as to the meaning of insanity in a court of law. This is largely a question for forensic medicine. The law is concerned with sanity only when there is a question as to whether or not the defendant understood that what he was doing was wrong, whether or not he was able to make this moral distinction.

"IT IS my opinion, and this opinion is shared by the psychiatrists who testified for the State, that Hammond went insane shortly after he killed Katherine Gray—that is, insane in the sense that he was no longer part of the

normal community, *insane in the sense that we believe every murderer is insane.* Believing that, we should therefore be compelled to free every murderer, for no sane man, doctors will tell you, murders, just as no sane man commits suicide. The commission of the crime of murder or suicide implies insanity, yet they are crimes. Why? Because *the legal test of insanity is whether or not the criminal knew that he was doing something wrong.* Nothing else is relevant.

"And from what we know of Hammond's deeds and motives, from what we know he said shortly after the first murder, is there any reason to entertain the slightest doubt that Hammond understood that it was wrong to kill? Is his the talk of a man who does not understand, who is incapable of making the moral distinction? I say to you that in his own words he has confessed complete understanding and complete legal sanity.

"And now let us follow this tragedy to its end.

"As Dr. Pryce told us, he was supposed to return that evening to see Hammond again. But that afternoon Maria telephoned to tell him it would not be necessary for him to come. What made her dismiss so old and true a friend so curtly, with no explanation? I think we can find the answer in the fact that Jim Shilling telephoned Maria before that.

"Jim hadn't believed Mulvaney's tale that he had seen Hammond leaving the yards alone, hours after he left Jim. He called Hammond. Hammond was asleep under the influence of drugs, so he spoke to Maria. Maria told him enough to frighten him. Then Jim made a search of the yards and found the body of Katherine Gray. He did not understand what had happened but he knew the only thing that could have happened—this from what Mulvaney had told him and from Maria. He called her immediately, taking time only to hide the body a little, and warned her to say nothing, to let no one in, to keep Hammond with her.

"We may question anything we choose about Jim Shilling, but we cannot question his loyalty to his friend. What he did was wrong, but he was thinking only of his friend's life. From the moment he knew what Hammond had done to the moment he died, he was busy with plans to save the life of his friend.

"I do not say that we know all of these events as facts sworn to by witnesses. Hammond's crimes were so many that he removed some of the witnesses we most need. Nevertheless we know these things with more certainty than some of the things that have been sworn to in this court. We know them because they fit perfectly, because they supply the only answers which fit the unalterable facts we know.

"We know then that Maria, who knew enough to guess what her husband had done, took the chance of calling Dr. Pryce—but after Jim called her and told her *exactly* what Hammond had done, she realized that she could not chance having Dr. Pryce return. Now that she knew, she took her place beside her husband and his best friend. She put her feelings to one side and prepared to fight for his life. That evening she telephoned her sister Tamara. She told Tamara she was all right and made no mention of leaving Hammond. She hung up suddenly, undoubtedly because Hammond was waking up.

"THE first chance he got to leave the yards, the next afternoon, Saturday, Jim came to see Hammond. We do not know what was said between

them, but again we can understand the the direction of events as Jim meant to plan them. We know that he came to help Hammond because he still had not reported one word of the murder to the police. His intent to remain silent is perfectly clear. We can be sure that though Jim could not understand what had happened, that he was there to help, to plan a way out. And from what Miss Denisov has told us, we know that Jim spoke also to Maria, for she planned to come to the party that next afternoon, because Jim wanted her there.

"We can well understand how Jim's mind must have been tortured that Sunday afternoon. He had scheduled the party long before and either was unable to call it off or afraid, because if anything later went wrong, the police might discover that interesting fact of a party called off. So he went through with it, and while his entire being was concentrated on the dangerous task he had undertaken, he suffered the presence of a huge gathering of his friends.

"He had stuck his neck out and it was something he could not forget, not for an afternoon, not for a moment. Several times he broke away to try to talk to Maria, and sometimes he succeeded. The two were seen in earnest conversation repeatedly—and remember, they had hardly known each other before that afternoon. But we can understand that because we know what they were talking about. We know that also because Jim told Maria where in the yards he had hidden Katherine Gray's body, and after she went there he followed her.

"We have shown you a chart of the Acme yards, and several of our witnesses marked the ramp which both Jim and Maria took. We have shown also that the ramp led to the east fence and there alone, and that forty yards off that fence was where Katherine Gray's body lay. There was no other way to get there. There was no other reason Maria and Jim had to go there. All witnesses have agreed that when she returned with Jim from that part of the yards she looked ghastly. She walked past her sister without answering. Shortly afterward she started to leave and Jim ran after her with a package of some sort, which she had forgotten.

"Possibly this package contained evidence of an incriminating nature which Hammond had left behind. We don't know because the package was never found again, and it doesn't particularly matter. When he left Maria and walked back with her sister, Tamara, he was plainly worried, and he said he wished Maria had not gone home alone. Why did he say that? What had Maria told him that made him feel afraid for her safety alone with her husband? We know because Dr. Pryce told us how Hammond had openly made threats against Maria's life. Marie told this to Jim—evidently it had not been an isolated occurrence—and that was why he was afraid. He was correct in his fears. We know that now.

"By then even Maria must have been afraid. She told her sister that Hammond had done something so terrible that it was driving him to a nervous breakdown. She told her friend Bester that she thought her husband was insane. She half knew to what she was returning, but she returned nevertheless, because she wanted to help her husband.

"And when she got home, Hammond killed her. He put his hands around her throat and choked out her life. He strangled her as he had strangled Katherine Gray four nights before.

"And here again, if we wish to understand Hammond, we must ask why?

What made him do it then?

"Was it because until Marie returned Hammond had not realized that Maria knew everything? From what his friend Reed has told us we know that Hammond did not know Maria had gone to see Jim, and that the thought of her going there upset him so much that he forgot he had asked Reed to come. Was he afraid that if Maria and Jim got together, that they might decide he wasn't worth helping, that they would tell the police? Was the evidence Maria brought back in the package the final straw for him?

"For he knew then that as long as he lived, his life would be in danger. From then on he would owe his life to the silence of two people, Maria and Jim. The power over his life or death had passed into the hands of the man he hated with every fibre of his being, and the hands of the woman he had married and hated just as much. Did he despair of a life so haunted and threatened? Didn't he see a way out of this difficulty and every difficulty which faced him?

"Why not destroy them all? Why not regain his life by taking those of the very people who had destroyed his? Surely that thought was in his brain the instant it occurred to him that Maria might have gone to see Jim. It was so logical, so easy. He hated them all now. He hated Jean too because he blamed her for everything. He knew he could never have her now, no matter what happened to Jim. She had refused to see him. She had kept her door locked when he groveled and wept to speak to her. He classed her with his enemies, and he decided to destroy them all. *He knew by then how he was going to get away with it; it was all clear then.*

"So he killed his bride of a few days and went to the yards to complete the job. There was a summer storm that night and it made things easier for him. The rain had broken up the party and sent everyone home. When he reached the yards he made his way to the dynamite shacks. He had been in the yards many times before and he knew where everything was—he had seen the scrap piles blasted many times during his afternoon visits, and he knew how to go about his task. He got the dynamite and planted it.

"Under cover of the storm he placed some dynamite near the houseboat. The rest he put under the body of Katherine Gray. When he depressed the plunger he thought he had done more than he did. He knew he had killed Jim and Jean because he knew they were alone in the houseboat. But he thought he had destroyed all evidence of what had happened to Katherine Gray. He thought, and he was accurate in his expectation, that not a single trace would remain of Katherine Gray.

"He was wrong because the rain, or some higher manifestation of essential justice, or some ironic twist of fate, fouled the fuses of the dynamite he had planted near Katherine Gray. Those fuses were found unexploded two days later. He saw the houseboat go up, but the concussion injured him and he crept out of the yards not knowing that he left unexploded dynamite behind.

"Later, when the police checked everything for fingerprints, they found none on any part of the shack and none on the dynamite he had planted under Katherine Gray. He had worked carefully up to then. But when the blast went off, perhaps because his gloves tore or perhaps because he was too badly muddled to know what he was doing, he left behind a full set of his fingerprints on the depressing lever. We have seen these prints and heard

how and where they were secured. There is not the least element of guesswork attached to the process by which he was thus identified as the murderer —there is no guesswork in fingerprints.

"Indeed, it is possible that Hammond *did not care* whether or not he left such prints. He was seen entering and leaving the yards that night, and he must have known he was seen. His defense was not to lay in any attempt to conceal the murderer's identity. *His defense was to exploit his obvious guilt.*

THAT is what I meant when I said he knew how he was going to get away with it. For it had occurred to him that he need not waste the secondary plan he had initiated earlier—the plan to let people think he was really insane. He had begun it with Reed, and when Reed came to see him, it occurred to him again. Before Reed left he managed to sound incoherent, to echo part of the story he had told him earlier, and he ended with a convincing demonstration in which he attempted to attack Reed. It was a promising plan and he took advantage of it.

"And all he had to do to insure its success was to carry it out from then on. He had to play insane all the way, to continue the act. But he was intelligent enough to understand that such an act had little chance of success if he was forced to play the role consistently before an audience of experts. And he knew the time would come. He knew he would have to answer questions, that he would have to portray a clinically accurate picture of legal insanity. So he was ready for it. He had planned the answer to that problem from the start.

"He resolved not to say one word from the moment he was caught.

"Thus he gave the psychiatrists who examined him enough scope to diagnose possibilities that could never have existed if he spoke or acted. He did nothing at all. He refused to eat, to sit, to walk. He played the role of a dead man, and he played it so completely that it was easy. *All he had to do was to do nothing.*

"Thus he could not be called to the stand as a witness. The evidence would have to be erected around him, without any help from him. And he was certain that somehow, somewhere, *someone* would fall for his act. There has *never* yet been a trial in which insanity played a part that the defense was not able to find authorities who would testify for the defense. He knew that his attorneys would surely find some authorities, or what passes for authorities, to help him. And then, with a split case, with conflicting opinions, with expert contradictions, could he not expect to go free? Hadn't this familiar trail been blazed by many before him?

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is the trail along which we now find ourselves, and I know, I trust—I believe deep inside me—that this is the end of the trail for Elliot Hammond. I believe that you have not been fooled by the act which started the moment Hammond was found sitting mutely beside the dead body of his bride and which has continued to this moment as he sits here pretending to be unaware of his failure. I believe that the evidence which binds Hammond so incontrovertably to his crimes will not be ignored by you. I believe that we have shown here that Elliot Hammond knew from the start what he was doing, knew the penalty for it, and resolved to do what he did without paying that penalty.

"The State now demands that penalty. Which is it to be—a year or two in a hospital while Hammond acts out a sham recovery and then goes free to kill again—or the forfeit of his life

for three—no, four—of the most dastardly crimes ever committed by the semblance of a human being? Which is it to be?

"I know what your answer must and will be. . . .



(EXCERPT FROM THE NEW YORK POST NOVEMBER 25, PAGE 3, CITY EDITION)

HAMMOND GUILTY!

Jury Takes 20 Hours Before It Convicts Elliot Hammond of Murder in First Degree. Defense Promises to Appeal to Governor!



GOVERNOR LEEMAN SAVES HAMMOND!

Pardons Sentenced Killer After Considering Appeals from Noted Psychiatrists; Explains Stand: "I Will Not Allow an Insane Man to Be Executed by This State." —Gov. Leeman

(EXCERPTS FROM THE NEW YORK POST, MAY 9, 1942, PAGE 4, WALL ST. EDITION)

BY EXECUTIVE ORDER of Governor Harold Leeman, the convicted and sentenced murderer, Elliot Hammond, will not be electrocuted on January 16, 1942, as ordered by the court in which he was found guilty of . . .

"I am satisfied," said the Governor, "after listening to the opinions of several world famous psychiatrists, that a more than reasonable doubt exists as to whether Elliot Hammond is insane at present. Whether or not Hammond was legally sane at the time he committed the murders is not the point. The point is whether this state is willing to execute a man who is completely insane. I am well aware of the state of public opinion on this matter, but I am unable, in good conscience, to take the path of least resistance after considering the overwhelming weight of opinion by impartial experts that it would be a crime against humane concepts to allow Elliot Hammond to pay for his crimes in the manner prescribed by the courts. . . ."

. . . It was agreed that Hammond would undoubtedly be placed in a state institution where he would, most likely, spend the rest of his life. . . .

ELLIOT HAMMOND, PARDONED MURDERER, TRANSFERRED FROM STATE ASYLUM FOR PRIVATE "TREATMENT" BY OWN DOCTOR

Secret Transfer of May 2 Revealed. "I Predicted This," Says District Attorney O'Day of Surprise Action

IN AN EXCLUSIVE DISPATCH to the POST, Lewis Burnbay, Special Investigator, today revealed that Elliot Hammond, "triple-killer" pardoned by Governor Leeman last December and sent to the State Asylum at Highland, N. Y., was secretly transferred a week ago to the private sanitarium of Dr. Leopold Schumer at Woodbourne, N. Y.

Officials at the Highland Asylum refused comment after pointing out that the transfer was duly noted on the weekly register and denied that tbere was any secret aspect to the highly unusual action by the N. Y. State Supervisory Board.

Dr. Schumer, reached by telephone, answered the POST'S questions candidly. Acknowledging that criminally insane patients were "infrequently" released for private treatment, be went on to attack "a policy which condemns ill men to a fate far worse than any prison, to a hopeless, needless illness for the rest of their lives." Said Dr. Scbumer: "It is widely admitted that the State institutions, hamstrung by small budgets, understaffed, crowded, have each year many patients who might have been saved . . ."

It was pointed out that there were legal grounds for Hammond's release, inasmuch as he had received a full pardon from Governor Leeman. As a ward of the State, Hammond's transfer to the sanitarium at Woodbourne was a matter for the State Supervisory Board to decide. Dr. Schumer stated that most of the expense involved in maintaining Hammond at his sanitarium had been underwritten by a group of Hammond's friends, but the expense has never actually been a factor. As early as last January, Dr. Schumer was quoted in an exclusive POST interview as saying: "I am still deeply interested in tbe case of Mr. Hammond. . . . I am not at all convinced his case is hopeless . . . (I would) undertake it at my own expense . . . (if it were made) possible to do this . . ."

"Tbis latest move shows how right I was," said District Attorney O'Day, who won his brilliantly waged battle to convict Hammond only six months ago. "There are certain individuals who have made it their business

to make a mockery of justice in this case and they are succeeding. . . . This is step 3 in the plan to free a murderer convicted in a court of law. Step 4 will be the announcement that Hammond has been cured and discharged—and that announcement too will be at least a week late . . . I intend to fight this miscarriage of pustice."

Questioned as to his plans, the District Attorney could hardly conceal what is admitted openly in other official circles—that there is probably nothing anyone can do.



(COMMENTS BY THE AUTHOR)

AND here, with one or two exceptions, ends the collection of printed matter which brings the story of Elliot Hammond close to the night of November 12, 1943, the night he died.

I was not with him when it happened. I had promised to come that night, but I didn't. The slow train that took me upstate to John Broome's home had worn me out. I felt unequal to a night drive of some seventy miles, including both ways, and John's gas ration was very low. Still, I would have gone, one way or another, if we hadn't found what appeared to be an excellent way out.

By dint of several phone calls, John found a neighbor who was driving in to Monticello that evening, and who was willing to go a few miles out of his way to perform an errand. We drove to his house—the man was Stanley Graper, a local milk farmer—and I gave him the box I had promised Schumer I would bring with me when I came. There was no need for me to go, I knew, as long as Schumer got his box. So I telephoned him and said I was sending it over and would come myself either the following day or Sunday. I didn't know then that every hour the box was delayed was an hour added to Elliot's life.

In the year and a half that Elliot had been under Schumer's care, the Doctor had made excellent progress. District Attorney O'Day had used the overwhelming evidence against Elliot as an emotional lever to convince the jury that Elliot was faking insanity, but his had beeen a victory of rhetoric over fact. Even among the psychiatrists who had testified against Elliot, there were several who later accepted Schumer's invitations to visit the patient, and who ended by agreeing with Schumer. (For those interested, I have included more detailed information on Elliot Hammond's condition, as Schumer described it to me; it seems to me that they play a really important part in the all-over story I have attempted to present here. These follow later because I think they belong, more logically, to the end of the story.)

I myself went to Woodbourne now and then and each time I saw evidences of progress. For several reasons, I somehow found myself delegated as the chief-go-between from Elliot's friends to the sanitarium. This was partly due to the role I had been forced to play in the trial, and partly because John Broome moved upstate and I visited him frequently, and thus found myself not too far from Woodbourne to make the trip. But it was also the result of an active interest I had taken in what had happened to Elliot Hammond, and because of that interest, Schumer began to treat me as a sort of *ex-officio* guardian. There were several reasons for my interest, but I never expected that I would ever do much about it—until the night of November 12, 1943.

Shortly before 8 P. M. that night, the telephone rang. Broome answered and called me to the phone. It was Schumer. He told me very briefly, in a low, tremulous voice, that Elliot was dead. He had dropped dead a minute after he opened the box, before the Doctor's eyes.

John took his car and we drove to Woodbourne. We got to the sanitarium atop Chester's hill at a quarter to nine, and by then Schumer was more composed. Elliot's body had been taken upstairs, to his room. We looked at him. His fingers were stretched out stiffly and his mouth was a thin, tight line. His eyes were open. Had I not known he was dead I would have thought he was looking at us. Later, after I had read his diary, I was struck by the passage in it where he had described the Sleeper who lay dead with his eyes open.

We went downstairs again and Schumer took us into his office. The box lay on his desk. It was shut, but the lock was open and the key was still in the lock. There was nothing much to tell. Graper, the farmer, had called and delivered the box. Schumer put it in his office and went up to call Elliot again. Finally he got a pass

key and went in. Elliot seemed quite calm, if tired, and said he had only a little more to write before he was through, but he went down to Schumer's office, taking the dairy with him. He was disappointed to learn I had not come, Schumer said, but when he saw the box he seemed taken back by it. He fingered it again and again, muttering to himself, asking Schumer several times if he was sure I had sent it. There was no question that he recognized it, however, said Schumer. Then, very slowly, he took out the little key he carried with him and inserted it in the lock.

It gave after a few attempts and the key turned. There was no expression on his face then but he shivered violently. He turned to Schumer as if to say something but then silently turned back and opened the box. He stood over it for a moment and a low groan escaped him. Then he backed away, started again to turn to Schumer, half-succeeded, and pitched headlong to the floor. He was dead when Schumer knelt over him.

Having told us this, the Doctor opened the box.

IT WAS filled with caked black mud. In the mud lay the decayed remains of a small crab with an abnormally large gone-grey claw, a ghost crab.

Because John had read part of the diary, the contents of the box held a special meaning for him as well as for Schumer, and the next day I understood. We left soon afterward. Schumer had made a considerable effort to speak to us and he was worn out. He had barely finished reading the last sections of the diary when we'd arrived and wanted to return to it.

On the way home John told me what he'd read. I had been with him two hours before Schumer telephoned, but the subject had not even come up—we had had more important matters (as we thought) to discuss. The little he was able to tell me kept me sleepless most of the night. Then, when we returned the next day, the Doctor told us that the autopsy had established Elliot's death as being due to a cerebral hemorrhage—rupture of a blood vessel in the brain. That afternoon I read the diary and later spent some time discussing it with Schumer. It was the first of several such discussions and there were several results.

For one, they started me on an investigation of the missing years in Jim Shilling's life. For another, they helped me decide to make this collection and seek to have it published. For a third, they left me with a sort of half-haunted perplexity that sometimes strikes me as amusing, but which still persists.

I have been unable to stop wondering about Elliot Hammond's metal monster. The more familiar I have become with all the available facts, (most of which I have already given you) the more I wonder. And these additional facts and continued conjecture bring out relationships and hypotheses that are not, I think, otherwise apparent. I venture I have seen more in them than appears immediately because of this intensive study, and I offer you the results. It seems to me they lead to at least three hypotheses.

THE FIRST HYPOTHESIS

THIS is the State's case, advanced by the prosecution under District Attorney O'Day. Offhand, it would appear that O'Day's establishment of the case against Elliot Hammond is sound and logical, in spite of its many guesses, and in spite of O'Day's refusal to believe in Hammond's insanity. If we believe this version of the four murders, it would seem that little remains for uncertainty, for the State's case accounted for everything . . . *or did it?* Suppose I put a few questions to you?

What about Thomas Stapley? Stapley was the night watchman who testified for the defense that he had seen Katherine Gray alive at 5:00 A.M., when Elliot was seen in Manhattan at 4:30 A.M., 14 miles away. O'Day threatened to try Stapley for perjury, and indeed, he was held for questioning after the trial. As O'Day said, Stapley's testimony attacked the entire case, for if it absolved Hammond of the murder of Katherine Gray, it therefore asked: Who did kill her? Who planted the dynamite under her if Hammond did not—for if Hammond did not kill her, why should he have put the dynamite there—and if he did not put it there, why should we assume he planted the dynamite beside the houseboat? So it becomes important to ask what was found out about the man who offered testimony that might have smashed the prosecution's case if it could

have been believed?

The investigation found that *in every way that could be checked, Stapley had told the truth.* He had been fired for drinking but he had claimed he couldn't drink because of ulcers; that he had taken the blame to protect Mulvaney, whom he liked, and because he had been ready to quit for a defense job.

Stapley's ulcers were easily established—specialists who examined him said that three ounces of whiskey would land him in a hospital, probably dead, and beer would be almost as bad. Mulvaney, the head watchman, was called. He decided Stapley was in enough trouble and admitted knowing that Stapley had falsely taken the blame for the others. The Federal Employment Agency in New York provided files which showed Stapley had applied for a defense job on July 18th, had turned down one job and been offered another in an Oregon shipyard. He had then, on July 29, twelve days before the murder investigation started, asked for two weeks to make up his mind. He finally accepted on August 13th and left two days later, part of a large shipment of workers west.

On August 13th, however, the newspapers had carried the story that Katherine Gray's body had been found in the yards. Had he not realized he was an important witness, possibly one of the last to see the girl alive? Why had he not volunteered information? Stapley admitted remembering he had seen the girl, but since the newspapers clearly accused Hammond of the murder and clearly said that Hammond had been in Manhattan at 4:30 that morning—and since he clearly remembered seeing *a* girl alive at 5:00 A.M.—he decided it was not the same girl, after all. And if he had any doubts, he finally confessed, he "didn't want to get mixed up" in a murder trial. He had been asked questions enough, he felt. He had gotten afraid, the way people fear such things. It was a natural enough reaction, even O'Day admitted. He knew of numerous cases where an important witness chose to remain silent from fear of "getting mixed up" in a murder case.

Finally, it was proven that Stapley was found by the Star Detective Agency on Defense Attorney Wells' lead. Wells had gotten a list of all employees in the Acme yards and been unable to locate Stapley. When the detectives found Stapley and talked to him, he admitted everything and agreed to come east. And he had been paid only his expenses.

So it was all true—except that no one but Stapley could ever be sure that he had seen Katherine Gray alive at 5:00 A.M. that morning. Even if one was ready to accept this and assume Stapley was mistaken in the time (highly unlikely for a watchman who checked all his moves against a time clock) how could he have said *he let her out of the gate and saw her walk away* when her body was found in the yards far from the gate? Could she have come back later, unobserved? Hardly possible, and if she had, didn't the time discrepancy already absolve Hammond? Could Stapley have mistaken her for someone else? But he had seen her under the gate lights; he chose her photograph from dozens. Who else could it have been? No one else had been seen entering the yards.

If we accept the State's case, we must believe that Stapley lied, and I know of no reason why he should. Wells came to us (Elliot's friends, who paid for his defense) for the money to bring Stapley east. He though no chance should be overlooked, though he could not bring himself to believe the story. Wells was the only one who even had a clue to Stapley's existence at that time, so if bribery was what induced Stapley to lie, only Wells could have bribed him. Yet I submit that it would be irrational to suppose that Wells bribed a witness he did not believe, using his own money, and then made little use of the witness beyond entering his testimony. Wells despairing use of Stapley would be enough to demonstrate his lack of faith in Stapley's value. Only Stapley maintained his story was true, and he remained unshakable to the end.

I repeat, to accept the State's case is to refuse to believe Stapley *for no other reason than that his story seems unbelievable.*

A SECOND series of questions. Mulvaney testified as follows: he saw Hammond leave the yards alone, soaking wet, at 3:00 A.M. Later that morning he told Shilling what he had seen. Shilling became greatly upset, refused to believe him, then calmed down and said that as far as he knew, Hammond had left at midnight with Katherine Gray. We may well

ask: Why was Shilling so upset? Why couldn't he believe Mulvaney?

Let us look at the State's answer. The State theorized that Jim phoned Elliot, got Maria on the phone, and was told enough to become frightened. He then searched the yards, found the body, called Maria and told her to allow no one to speak to Elliot, which accounts for Maria later calling Dr. Pryce and asking him not to return that evening.

Can we believe this? Assuming that Shilling did make the call, why should we assume that Maria told him anything? Maria *didn't* tell Dr. Pryce, an old friend. Why should she tell Jim Shilling—*whom she had never met before?* Furthermore, Shilling was frightened *before* he made the call. Why? Why was he frightened *in advance?* Had Elliot been acting so strangely the night before as to warrant such fearful suspicions on Jim's part? Then why should he have allowed Elliot to escort the girl home? And if he feared for the girl, why didn't he try to call *her* home? Katherine's room-mate was home until eleven that morning, hours after Mulvaney spoke to Jim, but Jim never called Katherine's home to inquire after her. Why not? Why was he afraid to call her home *before* he had reason to suspect anything had happened to her?

Again, how did Shilling know immediately where to search for Katherine's body? If we believe the State's case, we must believe that he knew where to look at once. The yards comprised hundreds of acres; it took a police squad two days of searching to find the body. According to the State, however, Shilling called Maria *that very afternoon and told her he had found the body.* How did he do it? Was he just lucky?

Can we assume that Maria had heard enough to tell Shilling where to look, and that was how he did it so quickly? The State didn't think so, but was it not possible? Yes, if we can believe that Maria would tell this to a man she had never met—a man she couldn't even be sure was the one he said he was. In view of Maria's extreme caution with everyone else, I think we must consider this hypothesis untenable.

Perhaps, we may think, Shilling had an idea of where to look among those hundreds of acres? But how? He said he had last seen Hammond and the girl leaving for the gate—but the body was found along a walk that led to the east fence and *nowhere* else! If Hammond and the girl had started for the gate, they could not have reached that part of the yards where the body was found, unless Hammond climbed over mountains of scrap, either leading the girl or carrying her. So we rule that out. Possibly then, we ask, Hammond and the girl started on the wrong walk? But they would have had to circle the pier to do it, as the prosecution's charts proved. Wouldn't Shilling correct them? Should we assume he merely bade them goodnight from inside the houseboat and had not known where they went? It would have been utterly unlike him. It could easily be shown that Shilling invariably guided his guests exactly to the walk they needed, and often took them to the gates, because it was so easy to get lost there.

So, if we accept the State's case, how do we answer: Why was Jim Shilling frightened by Mulvaney's information? Why didn't he call Katherine's home to ask about her? Why should we assume Maria told him anything? How was he able to find Katherine's body so quickly?

A THIRD question or two, about the fingerprints. The State said that Hammond had known about the dynamite from watching work crews blast the wedged metal, that he entered the yards, broke open the locked shacks, stole dynamite and fuses and detonators. Then, according to the State, he planted dynamite under Katherine Gray's body and beside the houseboat, hooked up the whole thing on one circuit and let go the plunger. The State's proof is that Hammond's fingerprints were found on the depressing lever.

But the State also admitted that no fingerprints were found on the unexploded dynamite or on the shacks. This was explained as being due to Hammond's carefulness—the fingerprints on the lever were either carelessness or resulted from shock or torn gloves—take your pick. Or, said the State, offering still another choice, it was possible Hammond did not care whether he *did* leave prints, since he was not going to attempt concealing his guilt but to exploit it.

I think that if all these choices are examined and pursued to a logical conclusion,

that they demonstrate the State's offer of these choices to be less due to generosity than confusion. Let us ask whether or not it was Hammond's intention to conceal his identity, taking each hypothesis in turn, and see whether or not they lead to a logical conclusion.

First, if we assume Hammond made *no* attempt to conceal his guilt, why didn't he leave fingerprints on the shack, the locks, the fuses, the unexploded dynamite, the wiring? He had literally dozens of places where he would naturally have left his fingerprints if he made no attempt to hide them. The fact that there were *absolutely no prints anywhere* but on the depressing lever is, I think, firm proof that he must have been cautious not to leave any, and those he did leave were the result of a momentary slip, or shock, or torn gloves. But that proves that he *did* attempt to conceal his guilt!

So we tackle the hypothesis that he *did* attempt to conceal his guilt? Now we assume that he didn't know he had left any prints behind. Nor did he know that Katherine Gray had not been blown up, or he would have attended to it. We assume he left the yards thinking there was no way to trace him, that he had killed Shilling and Jean Lowell and destroyed all evidence of his murder of Katherine Gray. Fine—but what about the body of Maria Denisov, his wife? If he was trying to get away with these murders, why didn't he try to do away with the body of his dead wife? The coroner proved that Maria was dead hours before the dynamite was exploded in the yards. Would a murderer who was trying to get away with his crimes be found sitting next to the body of the woman he had murdered the night before? The police found Elliot sitting next to the body of Maria the following morning. Was this how he attempted to get away with murder, to conceal his guilt? Didn't he know he could be executed just as easily for one murder as for four?

Should we perhaps assume that the explosion had shocked him so greatly that he didn't recover in time to try? For when the police came, he answered no questions, made no moves, and, in fact, portrayed the clinical picture which Dr. Schumer later called shock—*but this is precisely what O'Day called an act!* If he was acting, he was in full command of his senses—so why didn't he try to conceal his murder of Maria? But perhaps we should make a very fine distinction in time here—perhaps we should assume that he recovered from a genuine shock brought on by the explosion, found he had no time left to hide the body, and then went into his act?

But if he was suffering that kind of *contact* shock that addled his brain and incapacitated him, how did he get home? How did he make the complicated trip home from the yards? He could have done such a thing only if he suffered the psychological shock that Schumer diagnosed, and in that case, if he wanted to hide his identity as the murderer, he could still have tried in plenty of time. He could have, for instance, rigged a rope and tried to pass it off as suicide.

Better yet, why didn't he take Maria to the yards with him and kill her there too? If he was as cunning as the State claimed, cautious with his fingerprints, exits and entrances, why kill her at home, with his hands, and then return to be caught there? No, the fact that he was caught at home, sitting quietly beside the body, convinces me, at least, that he did *not* make any attempt to conceal his crime. And this, you see, makes each hypothesis equally untenable. There is no logical conclusion *in the evidence as presented* to make us believe he either intended or did not intend to hide his guilt. Then where is the State's logical case?

And, incidentally, what of the State's contention that Hammond, a newspaper reporter, learned enough about dynamite *from watching a few random operations* to rig up a highly technical, highly complex, dynamite setup? Is that statement believable? A half dozen experts I have asked all laughed at the notion. Even an excellent student of the technique, who had gone to competent books for instruction, would likely have blown himself up halfway through the job. The State adduced no evidence to show that Hammond had had recourse to such books—and don't think they didn't try to find that evidence!

FINALLY, I think we can safely question (having already questioned supposed fact) one of the prosecution's basic theories—the theory that Jim Shilling was willing to stick his neck out for Elliot to the extent of covering up a murder for him,

and involving himself as an accomplice after the fact, as lawyers say. I know of few friendships which might conceivably pass such a test. I do not think Jim's friendship for Elliot was remotely enough devoted to warrant such an action, nor do I know of anyone who thinks differently.

You are at liberty to think otherwise, and if you do, I must tell you also that no one who knew Elliot was able to accept another basic theory of the State's—the theory that Elliot murdered from an insane jealousy. But these are questions of character, and many people believe that friends are notoriously poor judges of each other when basic emotions and passions are involved. And these questions reveal no specific flaws or doubts concerning Maria's murder, except that they are not the ultralogical premises so assuredly offered to the jury.

The jury, it would seem, needed only the outward trappings of a logical case, plus a few isolated facts, to convict. Certainly it got no more than that, but can the District Attorney be blamed for making the best use of his limited facts? Can we blame the jury for accepting the prosecution's case, when the alternative defense case amounted to little more than passive resistance? Or should fault be found with the defense attorney? I think we made a great mistake retaining Wells, who accepted the case apathetically. The questions I have asked here could have been asked by an attorney who had not surrendered beforehand, who scarcely believed his own witnesses, and whose only defense against the charges was the attempt to prove insanity.

But this was true of all of us. We went to Wells precisely because of his experience with insanity cases. The newspapers called him the brilliant Wells, the wily Wells, the astute, dogged, defense attorney. What did we really expect? An acquittal based on grounds *other* than insanity? Was there enough evidence to warrant such an expectation?

I don't think so—not then. But I do think there is evidence enough now, with the diary and subsequent investigation, to warrant further thought about the case—at least further thought. So, to proceed to:

THE SECOND HYPOTHESIS

THIS hypothesis is based on a thorough study and interpretation of the Hammond diary, and its conclusion falls somewhere between the hypothesis offered by the State and the third, which follows this one. It is based on acceptance of the diary as true.

First, the diary presents a complex, uneven account of Hammond's thought processes while he supposedly reviewed his memories. Second, it offers an alternative, almost complete, explanation of the four deaths of which Hammond was accused. Because the diary is occasionally obscure and highly involved, we must first be sure we understand exactly the story it attempts to tell us. This story may be divided in two: part of it is the story of the Thing in the yards; part of it is the story of Hammond and his relationship with Jim Shilling, Jean Lowell, and Maria—but both remain parts of a single story and must be understood as such, in spite of this arbitrary simplification.

The story of the Thing tells us that Shilling found a strange, living intelligence in the yards, a Being fused by some great cosmic accident. It possessed vast powers, and those known to Hammond included telepathy, invisibility, communication by speech, and some kind of locomotion. It could kill and re-create a semblance of life, as in the case of Kathy Gray, or kill and suspend death, as with Maria. The Thing, moreover, had an awareness of self. It understood its uniqueness in the world and was increasingly morbid because of this. It sought acceptance (whatever that meant) first through Shilling and Hammond and failed. It then identified itself as a She-Thing, and its intelligence became warped to an extent where a like aberration in a human mind would be called madness. It controlled Shilling and forced him to bring Kathy Gray, and when it failed again (presumably to be accepted) it killed her. This set off a chain of circumstances which ended in the Thing killing Maria, aided by Shilling. Finally Hammond destroyed it, but changed Shilling's plan enough to deliberately include killing Jim. Hammond admits this one murder. Those of Maria and Kathy he ascribes to Shilling and the Thing. Likewise, he inferentially pleads innocent to the charge of killing Jean Lowell.

Not all of this is immediately apparent in the manuscript, but, as I intend to show, it is all there. Together with the developing account of Hammond's relationship

with Jim, Jean and Maria, it presents answers for practically every loophole in the State's case.

Hammond says he understood Jean's falling in love with Jim, that he was hurt but it was no terrible blow. "I've never known a better guy," he tells Jean. "I'm glad for both of you." She asks him to walk with her. They go into the yards because "the tide was too high on the beach to go there." While they walk, Hammond feels again the sensation he experienced once before in the yards, "the heavy and oppressive hold" and suddenly Jean has vanished. She does not respond to his calls and he feels "an unreasoning fear." When they are found a few minutes later by Jim and others, the reaction sets in and he laughs, but for the rest of the evening Jean and he are depressed. Later Jean tells him that she did not see or hear him when he called to her.

This story presents an alternative explanation for the supposed quarrel Hammond and Jean had over Jim. Likewise, his seemingly strained relations with Jim, following that evening, takes on a new aspect as Hammond explains it as the result of fear and a growing obsession in which he sees mud and ghost crabs everywhere. This too would explain his poor work at the newspaper and his failing health. By this time Jim has openly confirmed Hammond's terrible suspicions. Shortly afterward, Hammond comes to me and tells me his story, and fails to convince me of anything except the possibility that he is mentally ill or overworked.

He returns home and finds Maria waiting for him. He had had an affair with her once, and now, thoroughly frightened, weary, feeling more than ever his loneliness, he is overjoyed to find her and to realize she still loves him, and he likewise realizes "not all at once" that he is in love with her. (Hammond invests this new love with a magic quality, "a dream that had come true" but even if we believe there are better-understood motivations possible here, we can accept his statements at face value because he obviously believed them.) He marries Maria, hoping to forget his terrible knowledge, but he fails. The obsession is too strong, the fear persists. He is sitting with her, beginning the first of several letters to his friends, when it seizes him and he runs out to sit beside a brook. *(Here we have an explanation of why Hammond wrote me alone of his marriage.)* Instead of Maria rescuing him, he takes her back to the city and is forced to involve her in his own tragedy.

AT HOME that night he drinks, trying to forget, and though he sees that Maria is in misery he cannot tell her what the trouble is. Finally he runs out of the house because of the "anguish in her face . . . too strong to hide." Without intending to go to Jim, he finds himself approaching the yards. Inside he hears a scream. He crawls up the ridge and looks down on the houseboat. He sees Jim kissing Kathy Gray. She is crying and she breaks away from him. Jim cries out to warn her, but is too late. The Thing strikes—"flame flashed . . . in midair . . . the sound of her footsteps stopped all at once . . ." He hears the Thing intone, "So softly death succeeded life in her . . ." He sees her body and then he lies exhausted and horror-stricken on the beach before he leaves the yards. "The tide," he says, "started to come in and the waves washed over me,"—thereby explaining the fact later reported by Mulvaney, who saw Hammond leave the yards soaking wet.

And here we reach one of the strangest points in the narrative, though it is not included in the diary itself. Hammond says that he saw Kathy lying ". . . dead, mangled . . ." before he left the yards. He does not say when he left there, writing only, ". . . I must have been there a long time . . ." but we can retrace his movements because Mulvaney saw him leave at 3:00 A.M. and Mrs. Bailey saw him at Jean's door at 4:30 A.M. The trip between those two places would take about an hour and a half at that time of night.

Against these mutually substantiating statements we have Stapley's testimony that he saw Kathy Gray alive at 5:00 A.M. when she left the yards and walked towards the trolley line. If this is true, it seems to prove that Hammond could not have killed Kathy—but Hammond says she was already dead when he left. However, (as already indicated in a footnote and presently in these remarks) the diary supplies an answer to this apparent dead-end road.

Hammond sums up the entire scene outside Jean's door, which has been described in detail by Mrs. Bailey, in one short sen-

tence: "I tried to tell Jean but she wouldn't listen." He returns home, and here again he but vaguely indicates what was later fully recounted at the trial—the scene between him and Maria's sister, Tamara, where she threatens to have the marriage annulled and wants to take Maria away. Of this he writes merely: "I cannot understand why she was here . . . I finally said something that made her leave."

Then he tells Maria everything. As he writes of this, he returns to describe Kathy's death, thus completing the unfinished episode. He suggests here that some sort of compact existed between Jim and the Thing, and that it had apparently been agreed that the Thing was not to kill—but when Jim cried out against the killing, he was instantly silenced.

Then he goes on to write of the following day. The diary becomes elusive and wanders about, as if recalling that day is enough to influence him at the time of writing. Maria tells him that Jim Shilling telephoned. He told her, she says, that he had seen Elliot the night before—that Elliot had been acting peculiarly and had left with Kathy Gray.

Hearing this, Hammond sees something is terribly wrong. He knows Jim didn't see him the night before. Even if he can reconstruct how Jim learned he was there, he can't understand why Jim said that he, Hammond, left with Kathy. He denies it but Maria cannot believe him; she keeps begging him to remember. It occurs to him that he can prove Jim didn't see him. If he had seen Jim, wouldn't he have told Jim of his marriage? Then, knowing this, wouldn't Jim mention it when he spoke to Maria? Conversely, not knowing this, wouldn't Jim be surprised to find Maria answering the phone? He phrases the questions mentally: "What did Jim say when he found it was you who answered the telephone? . . . Did he wish you happiness?" But he does not ask the questions because he realizes how easily Maria can assume he told Jim nothing—for, when she recalls how upset Elliot was the preceding night, hearing Jim say the same thing, with no reason to suspect Jim of lying—how can she accept his denial? Anticipating this, Hammond remains silent. "I must sit here and work it out," he writes. Then he adds: "Call the Doctor and tell him not to come . . . this is nothing for a doctor. . . ."

SO HERE the diary offers a version of that day's events which is completely opposed to the one offered by the State. We learn it was Hammond who told Maria everything, not Jim. We learn also that Maria called Dr. Pryce and told him it would be unnecessary for him to return because Hammond—*not Jim, as the State theorized*—told Maria to keep the Doctor away. Furthermore, we find corroborating data for any doubts we had about Maria's confiding in Jim so early, and over the telephone.

But this section of the diary also provides answers to questions of much greater importance.

First, we find an answer to why Jim Shilling became so upset when Mulvaney told him of having seen Hammond leave the yards, soaking wet, at 3:00 A.M. the night before. *For, until Mulvaney mentioned it, Shilling hadn't even known that Hammond had been in the yards at all!* Learning that Hammond had been in the yards for the four hours between eleven and three, he instantly realized that Hammond had very likely witnessed the murder of Kathy Gray. But he recovered from the shock a moment later and told Mulvaney that Hammond had left at midnight with Kathy Gray—thus preparing the groundwork for an alibi, (as will shortly be seen).

Once that was done, he called Hammond. Maria answered the phone. Jim must have been startled, and probably he felt his way very cautiously. We can safely assume that Maria said no more than that Elliot was ill and asleep. Then, pursuing his alibi, Shilling told Maria he had seen Elliot the night before, that Elliot had been acting strangely, and that he had left with Kathy Gray. Thus, while ostensibly calling to inquire about Elliot, Shilling furthered his purpose.

And now we see we have the answer to why Jim did not call Kathy Gray's apartment—*he knew very well where she was!* But shouldn't he have called there precisely for that reason, to cement his alibi even more? Undoubtedly he should have done that, but he couldn't afford it just yet. For to call there was to focus attention on the yards, and he wanted no investigation of the yards until he was ready for it—but he could not be ready until he had removed Stapley, the night watchman!

Why did he have to remove Stapley? The answer is to be found as the diary continues

to the next day, the Saturday afternoon when Shilling came to visit Elliot. As the footnote to that section says, the diary is scarcely coherent at times as Hammond reconstructs the conversation, but careful study, added to what we already know, brings out the story.

At the very beginning, Hammond tells why Jim came to him. ". . . swear you will help me," Jim begs, and Hammond says: "There was no denying him . . . we were together in this . . ." Hammond proposes that they tell the truth to the police. Shilling declares that course is impossible. He asks: "Do you understand what it is to be charged with murder? . . . Can you show them the Thing? . . . Can you make anyone understand?" Still Hammond persists: "Tell, Jim, and let whatever happens . . ." but Jim stops him by asking if Hammond realizes his life is at stake: "Your life alone, Elly. *You alone!*" Hammond understands what Jim means—that Jim is referring to the alibi he prepared for himself—and he says: "Because you've said you saw me last night . . . you've said I left with Kathy Gray?"

Shilling pleads with Hammond: "I had to say what I did . . . the Thing made me say it . . . the Thing had already done something else to make me safe." He explains what the Thing did, and why: "He had told the Thing that the murder of a human was a matter . . . to punish . . ." and that he would be punished. Then" . . . the Thing had raised (Kathy) from the swamp where she lay dead . ... the body of Kathy Gray had been made to leave the yards *long enough to be seen leaving* . . ." (Italics mine—D.V.R.)

In other words, Shilling tells Hammond that when he told the Thing he would be blamed and punished for the murder, the Thing had protected him by "falsifying the spark of life" in Kathy long enough for her to be seen by Stapley, leaving the yards ostensibly alive. That was the protection and the alibi provided him by the Thing.

But, Shilling continues, the next morning Mulvaney told him of seeing Hammond leave the yards at 3:00 A.M. The sudden news confounded him. Obviously afraid of what Hammond might do, that he might go to the police and tell them of Kathy's murder, ". . . panic had overtaken him . . ." and in his panic the Thing gave him a new way out. ". . . . In the absence of his will . . ." it forced him to tell Mulvaney that, as far as he knew, Hammond had left at midnight with Kathy. Thus, if Hammond talked, Shilling felt safe, for Hammond ". . . had been seen by many that night, arriving and leaving strangely, acting strangely . . ." And, he asks Hammond, ". . . do we not believe that a murderer must or may act strangely before and after commission of the deed? . . ."

BUT this new alibi had a single flaw—Stapley. This witness, carefully established for the first alibi, could ruin the new one by testifying he had seen Kathy Gray alive after Mulvaney had seen Hammond leave! *So Stapley had to be removed.* If Stapley ". . . stopped existing . . ." says Shilling, there would be no one to say Kathy had been alive after Hammond left the yards.

Having told Hammond all this, Shilling says he ". . . refused to acquiesce to this murder . . ." and came instead to Hammond to warn him and to beg for help in destroying the Thing.

The fact is that Shilling could not have had Stapley killed unless he went out himself and did the killing, and he would have had to find out where Stapley lived to do it, aside from other practical questions. The comment on page 72 has already gone into this matter in some detail, but a brief summary here can do no harm. Quoting the comment, then: ". . . Stapley was not at the yards for six days following that night (the night when Kathy Gray was murdered) and when he returned, was fired and left for the west coast . . ." The comment goes on to say: ". . . Here we can find . . . Shilling's motive in coming to Hammond for help . . ." and this motive may now be tackled.

(Although it is now abundantly clear, for the sake of the record, I ought to point out that only this explanation of what occurred in the yards—the Thing "falsifying the spark of life" in Kathy—offers an answer to Stapley's apparently contradictory testimony.)

At this point, Hammond reports what Shilling told him of the cycle and then suggests the plan to destroy the Thing, to which he agreed. Ignoring for the moment the skeptical tone of his writing, what does he say of the "cycle"? Shilling says: "I can't explain it . . . it's a periodic thing . . . I feel it from time to time . . . this is one

of the intervals in which I can think and act alone and feel myself an individual . . . its influence wanes from time to time . . . you felt its power of compulsion . . . and yet it wasn't always so, was it? . . ." To this Hammond partly agrees, and when Shilling tells him this is their last chance to destroy the Thing before there are more murders, he agrees to the plan.

What is the plan? We must piece it together from the fragments in which Hammond wrote of it. ". . . If it worked, the Thing might be destroyed, and what remained of Kathy Gray would be lost forever . . ." He mentions the part on Sunday, the next day, as part of the plan, and indicates the alibi to be given to the police: "The party became very disorderely and wild—what must have happened was that some of the people there who had become too drunk to understand what they were doing had wandered off and accidentally found the shack and engineered the frightful prank which thankfully had hurt no one . . ." Of the plan itself: ". . . We had planned to destroy the Thing after everyone had gone. Jim had arranged everything. I was to take my appointed place in the yards, where he had set the detonators. At the appointed time he would come out, call to me that he was out of the dangerous area. Then I would set off the dynamite . . . The same blast would destroy Kathy's body . . . When the police came, we would have our story . . . "

Before we turn critical attention to the mechanics of this plan (in which Hammond was merely an agent) let us see what happened to upset it.

When Shilling left, Hammond writes, "I looked down into the street and saw Maria meet him . . . I never found out what they spoke about." We still do not know for a certainty what they spoke about, but we can make a good guess or two. We know Maria told Jim she was coming to the party on the houseboat the next day, because at eleven that night she called her sister at he Besters and told her so. We know also that she had seriously begun to doubt Elliot's sanity by then. It seems safe to venture that Maria confided in Jim to some extent that afternoon, taking Jim's word that he was there to help Elliot, believing that Elliot had best be kept in ignorance.

This is apparent partly because of the fact she did not tell Elliot where she was going the next afternoon. Hammond writes: "Suddenly it was Sunday and Maria was not with me . . . I was worried about her . . ." He was greatly upset about her when I came, as I testified, and finally he threw me out. "She must have said something," he writes, ". . . but I do not remember it." From what has previously been recorded, we understand why he was so worried. As Shilling had told him: ". . . This is just the beginning for the Thing . . . It won't stop here . . ."

(This is one interpretation. There is another, which I have decided to include in the Third Hypothesis, where I think it belongs. It is concerned with Hammond's possible suspicions of Shilling's motives, which also made Hammond fear Maria's going to the yards.)

THAT evening Maria returns, and instantly, as Hammond looks up and sees her, he feels ". . . the prescience of . . . doom . . ." She is already dead, he says: ". . . the Thing had taken her life as it had taken Kathy's." She seemed alive but ". . . all that remained of this semblance of life . . . was to end when she opened the box . . . Jim had given her . . ." Maria can still speak a little. She tells Elliot that she went to the place in the yards where Kathy's body lay and saw it. Jim followed her and then the Thing killed her. With "uncomprehending terror" she pleads for Elliot's promise not to go to the yards, prays for him, then dies.

She dies after Hammond opens the box. He opened it not to bring on her death but ". . . to fight the visible death . . . so patient before it claimed her . . ." He remembers the way she looked then, ". . . the pallid, weary face, the fire dying in sightless eyes, the small blue marks that ringed her throat, choking off her last breath."

Thus Hammond explains Maria's murder —or, rather, he states the circumstances which surround it. For he does not, in so many words, *explain* how it happened. He tells us merely that Maria told him Jim followed her into the yards and, presumably, got the Thing to kill her. But she was killed unlike Kathy in that her death was suspended until she opened the box.

Surely this episode is among the strangest in this strange story. Until now everything has been explained, no matter how strange-

ly, in terms of an internal logic. Why should this episode be left unexplained?

The answer is that it *has* been explained. It takes a little searching to find the explanation, I admit, and even then we must supply part of it, but this circumstance is understandable. The diary indicates that, as Hammond drew closer to the end of his story, he believed it less and less. From an occasional manifestation of doubt in the early sections (". . . the unreality of everything I have written . . .) he went on to where, at the end, he was writing of his ". . . prison of memories . . . false as they are . . ." By the time he had reached this last episode, his doubts had accumulated to the point where he no longer bothered to explain anything. However, we can find an explanation because he was generally very careful with details—and what appears to be missing here has already been accounted for in another section of the diary.

Let us go back to the Saturday afternoon when Shilling comes to visit Hammond. Shilling tells Hammond this is their last chance, for ". . . when the cycle is over, all these thoughts will be known to her (the Thing). . . . She's failed with me—I'm useless to her. Do you know what it means for me to go back there?" Hammond thinks of an alternative, soliloquizing: "And not to go back? To have Kathy Gray's body found? To have her found and (for Jim) not to have come back? No. . . ." The alternative, Jim's not going back, is no good because Jim would be incriminated if he didn't go back and the body was later found.

So Hammond thinks of another possibility. He says: "But the Thing had brought her back to life—" and Jim interrupts: "No, she only looked as if she were (alive)." Hammond says: "But that was enough." Jim then realizes what Hammond is thinking and says: "No, Elly. I've thought of the same thing a thousand times since then, but it's too late. The way the Thing killed her made it impossible. If only I had been able to forsee it . . . that could have been done—she (Kathy) need never have returned at all. . . ."

What are they talking about? I don't think the subject is too obscure, but let us make it absolutely clear by finishing the interrupted sentences and unfinished remarks. In this version of the foregoing conversation, italics will signify what we have supplied.

HAMMOND says: "But the Thing had brought her back to life, *so why could she not have remained alive?* Hammond never finished because Jim objected: "She only looked as if she were alive." Now, says Hammond, "But that was enough. *Why couldn't the same thing be done again? Why couldn't she be made to look as if she were alive, just long enough to leave the yards, to do anything that would remove suspicion from us?"*

Notice now how perfectly Jim's recorded answer fits here. He says, "No, Elly. I've thought of the same thing a thousand times since then, but it's too late. The way the Thing killed her made it impossible. If only I had been able to foresee it . . . that could have been done—she need never have returned (to the yards) at all . . ."

In other words, Hammond's alternative would have been possible *if Jim had been able to foresee Kathy's death.* That was now impossible—*but here we see how this alternative could have been employed with Maria!* If only we assume that Jim did foresee Maria's death, as he certainly did if he planned to murder her through the Thing.

That Hammond concluded Jim *did* plan to kill Maria is plain enough. Maria told him that Jim followed her to where Kathy's body lay, that the Thing killed her, but that final death is to come to her when she opens the box. Hammond cannot believe this. He opens the box to prove to Maria that it is untrue, and Maria dies. Marks appear on her throat, marks that make it look as if she has been strangled (later established by an autopsy).

Then Hammond understands. Hadn't Jim told him that ". . . Kathy need never have returned (to the yards) at all . . ." He sees the mistake that was made in Kathy's case has been corrected, anticipated, in Maria's—*she has been killed in a way that suspended her death*—and the release of that suspension lay within the box Jim had given her.

So Hammond goes to the yards, intending to blow Jim up with the Thing. All he need do is not give Jim the warning to get out of the dangerous area. When he gets there he finds he does not have to wait: "Everyone had gone because of the rain." He calls to Jim, waits for him to appear at the door, then: ". . . the houseboat lifted in a great orange blaze . . ."

But Hammond did not know that Jean Lowell had remained behind, and that he was blowing her up, too! He writes of Jim: "He was alone." Nowhere does he contradict this impression or indicate any motive for killing Jean. Indeed, *even at the time of writing,* he still does not know that he killed Jean.

Nor does he know that he did *not* blow up Kathy Gray's body that night! While he writes that he does not believe his own story, he feels that it has some strange elements of truth—that one of these elements is the fact that he can provide ". . . at least one answer for your world . . . I have told you what happened to Kathy Gray when she disappeared . . . when all trace of her was lost one night. . . ." Hammond still thinks that Kathy's disappearance has never been explained since the night she saw Shilling!

Finally, this account of the explosion answers the State's dilemma on the matter of fingerprints and the technical proficiency needed to handle dynamite. *Shilling* was in a position to have learned all he needed to know about dynamite. He knew where everything was kept in the yards and he had the time to arrange the wiring. Naturally, he would be careful not to leave a single fingerprint on anything he touched. When Hammond came to blow up everything, he was in no condition to worry about fingerprints. The indication is that he had no intention of concealing his part in the explosion.

From what we have been able to piece together, he left the yards in a shocked condition. He had brought the box with him for some reason, and he still had it when he left the yards, bleeding and torn, and he went into a curio shop nearby and left the box there. Then he went home and was found by the police, sitting beside Maria's corpse, unable to say a word, unable to react to anything. And that ends the story told in Hammond's diary, to which we have added some other things we knew.

WELL, what about this second hypothesis? Can we believe it? The State's story seemed to hang together until we began asking questions. We can ask one or two questions here, but no more. We can ask, for instance: how did Kathy Gray get back into the yards after Stapley saw her heading for the trolley, and why wasn't she seen? We can ask why she had to go back to the yards at all, except that Shilling seems to have implied it couldn't be done, as Hammond quotes him. As for the relationship between Shilling and Kathy, Hammond confesses his own ignorance. Aside from these minor points, everything seems to be explained.

Indeed, the most astonishing thing about Hammond's diary is that it has an answer and an explanation for every loophole in the State's case!

Is that sufficient reason to accept it? The question is rather pointless, because I don't think there is much chance anyone can accept Hammond's story. We can't believe it, we say—in other words, *it just isn't true.*

Having decided the story is untrue, we must decide whether we think it is untrue by design or by accident. That is, did Hammond deliberately write an untrue story or didn't he? I phrase this choice more simply as one between believing, (1) the story is a fake, or, (2) a mistake. But we just can't decide this without evidence one way or another, if our decision is to have meaning. So, let's take the first choice and examine it. The premise, then: the story is a deliberate fake.

If Hammond's diary is a fake, it is certainly clever and elaborate. A person attempting such a fake would have to be in a special position. I have listed at least four qualifications such a person should be able to meet.

(1) He would have to have a very strong motive. The diary's fake story should do something for him that could probably not be done in any other way. (2) He would have to know every detail of the case, so he could relate the smallest facts to make a coherent story. (3) He would need time enough to work out the story, because it is so complex. (4) If we grant the first three conditions, the fourth, necessary one is that the person would be much more sane than anyone thought Hammond was.

Now, how does Hammond fit these qualifications? Remember, that we are assuming, for the present, that the diary's story is a deliberate fake. With that in mind, let's see.

First of all, suppose the State's case is basically true? Suppose that, for all its flaws, the truth was more nearly approached by the State than anywhere else? Suppose Hammond was really guilty of premeditated murder? These questions seem

foolish after the time we spent picking apart the State's case, but remember what an inordinately difficult case it was. If a murderer kills all witnesses, blows up the scene of the crime with dynamite, then refuses to say a word, how can the State possibly be expected to fashion an airtight case? Can we reasonably expect as good a job, under such circumstances, as in cases where there are possible spot witnesses, ballistics experts, chemical analyses, and a defendant who tries to defend himself, thus giving the State a chance to riposte?

SUPPOSE just one or two small facts, which Hammond knew the State could probably never get—suppose these facts would have changed the entire case? One or two small, uncorrected, uncorrectable errors could throw the entire structure off, though it was basically correct. What if, for instance, Shilling was not the entirely blameless victim the State thought he was—and was, instead, more or less in league with Hammond? Hammond could still be guilty as hell of the four murders, but the troublesome questions about the dynamite might be seen in an entirely different light.

Or take Stapley's testimony. If the diary's story is a fake, what a marvelous stroke of luck that testimony was for the story. Even though Stapley might tell the absolute truth, a minor mechanical flaw in the reconstruction of the crime could pervert that truth beyond recognition. For example: we know that Hammond left the yards at 3:00 A.M.; that he was seen in Greenwich Village at 4:30; that he was at home at 5:00. We know that Kathy Gray was seen leaving the yards at 5:00. Does that positively preclude Hammond as her murderer? How do we know Hammond didn't leave home at 5:15, meet Kathy somewhere by pre-arrangement, then take her back to the yards and kill her? How do we know Shilling wasn't in on it? Perhaps he might have been involved quite innocently, but he might have been able to let Hammond and Kathy enter the yards unobserved, through some little-known entrance. Why not? What do we know?

No one *knows* what the relationship there was; it might have been anything at all. No one *knows* what Hammond did after 5:00 A.M. that morning—his diary says he stayed home, but Maria isn't here to corroborate him. No one *knows exactly when* Kathy was killed. The autopsy placed it within a period of six hours, time enough for any variation on the State's thesis that it was done between 12:00 M., when Shilling told Mulvaney Kathy left, and 3:00, when Mulvaney saw Hammond leave. Maybe Shilling lied to Mulvaney? Shilling isn't here to be cross-examined.

In short, everyone who could, conceivably, contradict the diary's story is dead—and one small error might play havoc with a case that was basically correct. Should we reject the State's efforts to defend us against a clever murderer precisely because the murderer's cleverness has made the State's task so difficult?

So, if the State was basically correct, we see that Hammond qualifies under the first condition—he has a strong motive for writing this diary. His motive is to concoct a story that dovetails with the one he originally planted with me, as continued evidence that he was legally insane. If this is so, and District Attorney O'Day correctly guessed Hammond's plan from the start, how beautifully things turned out for Hammond nevertheless. He had destroyed enough evidence to give him a chance to beat the case on its own merits. If that failed, all he had to do was continue the act and keep his mouth shut. And he finally won when he fooled several outstanding psychiatrists sufficiently to get them to go to the governor.

From a State institution he went to a private one and began to stage a slow, miraculous recovery during which he wrote a diary. The diary was proof of his insanity, but the way he wrote it, he showed he was not far from recovery. All that remained was for him to be persuaded that his diary was the product of a once disordered, now almost recovered, imagination—and he had laid the foundation for that! At the end of his diary he was offering to "surrender" to Dr. Schumer, acknowledging that he could hardly believe anything he thought he remembered.

Conditions 2 and 3 were always present. Hammond was in the courtroom every day of the trial, and he heard every shred of evidence that the State presented. He was familiar with every last detail. And he had a year and a half in which to work out his story, and to make it coincide with the one he'd planted with me.

So the first three conditions are fulfilled.

Hammond had the motive, the facts, the time. What of condition 4—that to have done this, Hammond would have had to be much more sane than anyone thought he was? If Hammond's insanity was unquestionable, the other three conditions mean nothing. On the other hand, if there was any reason to question the authenticity of Hammond's insanity, we apparently have a case. This fourth condition is like the fourth leg of a chair—when you add it to an otherwise useless affair, you get something solidly substantial. Well then, is there any reason to doubt the genuineness of Hammond's insanity?

There is. The simple fact of the matter is, that until the night of Hammond's death, *Dr. Schumer himself had become more and more uncertain about Hammond's insanity.*

I PROMISED, earlier, to include more detailed information on this matter of Hammond's insanity. This is where I think such information belongs. It is a part of the all-over story, of which the diary, the clippings, testimony and various hypotheses are other parts.

Elliot Hammond was a patient in Dr. Schumer's sanitarium from May, 1942 to November, 1943—just about a year and a half. In that time I saw him perhaps six or seven times at the most, but at least two of these visits were limited to my merely observing him, unsuspected, while he walked about the lawn; those were occasions when Schumer wanted no possibility of an unsettling influence. The other occasions, when I did speak to Elliot, were far apart enough to mark distinctly the rapid rate of his recovery. The last time I saw him was about three months before he died. I was with him for half an hour, and during that time we spoke about various things—the war, John's work at the farm, the whereabouts of one or two casual acquaintances. It was all fairly impersonal, and the only thing of importance he mentioned was the fact that he was contemplating writing a diary which would, as he said, "tell the story of a very important period of my life."

He had mentioned it once before, and I heard about it with some frequency after that when Schumer wrote me. I knew that he had been discussing this "important period" with Schumer, and that the Doctor was greatly interested in the idea. At that time I had no idea what Hammond remembered of those dark days—indeed, not until I read the diary did I realize that he didn't know Jean Lowell was dead, or that Kathy Gray's body had been found. (That is, according to his story.) Impressed as I was by the evidences of his improvement, I really had no idea of what he was going through or what was happening to him. All that time, it turns out, Dr. Schumer's uncertainty about Hammond was growing.

But let me tell it more or less as Schumer told it to me. The following *resume* is a condensation of the Doctor's remarks during the discussions I had with him, after Elliot died. Part of it is based on memory, the latter part mostly on notes I took. I have put Dr. Schumer's remarks in quotes nevertheless, and I have also edited them to keep out the disturbing factors of his grammar and accent.—D.V.R.



(A CONDENSATION OF REMARKS MADE BY DR. LEOPOLD SCHUMER TO DAVID V. REED AFTER THE DEATH OF ELLIOT HAMMOND)

"THE Hammond case interested me from the very start, as you know. From the beginning, the syndrome were confusing. It was extremely difficult to launch even the first tentative diagnoses.

"You recall what I said at the trial. I was convinced that he was truly insane, in the legal sense of the word, and that he had been so at the time he committed the crimes. But legal insanity is a simple matter to deal with; we define it as the inability to make a distinction between wrong and right—a sort of moral idiocy. Insanity as a medical matter, however, is quite another thing.

"The very word *insanity* is no longer used among doctors. It has become as meaningless to speak of *insanity* as it would be to group a fracture, a hernia and a carcinoma under the vast term:

illness. That tells us nothing. It gives the same value to eyestrain and chronic tuberculosis.

"The psychiatrist deals with manifestations of the abnormal mind, and where possible, with psychotherapy as a cure. But what is the abnormal mind? That classification is still enormous. It includes the neuroses, the psychoses, and the feebleminded. This last group we can dismiss immediately as "incurable" at present. These we segregate, train if it is possible, and use in studies of eugenics, no more.

"The greatest percentage of cures is found among the neuroses. There are three divisions here: neurasthenia; psychasthenia; hysteria. These cases lend themselves to psychotherapy because they are all functional disorders. These cases are not popularly known as "insane"—most of them are grouped under "nervous breakdown" and such terms.

"The psychoses likewise include cases which are seldom labeled "insane" by the layman. Psychoses of a toxic nature such as drugs or glandular disorders, and organic disorders like senile dementia or general paresis are cases for medical and surgical treatment, not for psychotherapy.

"It is under the heading of functional psychoses that we find the cases generally called "insane." There are three groups here: the manic-depressive; the dementia præcox—now generally called schizophrenia; the paranoia. Because these cases are functional disorders, the only treatment would appear to be psychotherapy, but this is not so because they are usually inaccessible; the doctor cannot "get through" to them. (In some of these cases, insulin shock and metrazol is used with excellent results.) To say that Elliot Hammond was "insane"—in the common use of the term—is tantamount to placing him within one of these three groups of functional psychosis.

"Now let us review Hammond's history. I first saw him after he had been in prison for some time. I examined him several times. Once he was subject to temporary tics. Another time he appeared to be paralyzed in both arms. A third time his eyeball muscles had contracted to give him the syndrome of nearsightedness. When he was in the hospital for observation, records were kept, and I managed to be permitted to study them. There were recorded instances of convulsive attacks resembling those of an epileptic, except that instead of random movements of arms and legs, Hammond's movements were as if he was warding off someone or something. All of these things were typical of hysteria.

"What is hysteria? It is not very common, especially among men. It is a defense against a violent emotional shock—shock of some kind is present in all hysterical cases. The symptoms are numerous. In addition to those I have mentioned we find: amnesia; fugue, or amnesia for certain events; somnambulism, where the sleepwalker seems to act out his dream; multiple personalities, sometimes with amnesia for the other personalities; narcolepsy, or sudden sleep; mutism; anasthesia, or loss of sensitivity, and many others. All of these are the mechanisms of retreat and defense. There is nothing organically or structurally wrong—the individual has been shocked into this defensive, abnormal behavior.

"What I could learn of Hammond's background just before the murders also fitted in with the diagnosis of hysteria. The exception was that the shocking factor seemed to have been of his own creation. I felt he had been under great mental and emotional strain for weeks. Finally he broke under the

strain. Instead of retreating at once to hysteria, he undertook a series of actions which, to his already abnormal mind, seemed to offer a promise of relief. Some mental disorder of which I knew nothing, had caused these actions. But after he acted he gained enough insight, momentarily, to be shocked into hysteria.

"In other words, the hysteria not only defended him against knowledge of his own actions, but also hid from us the predisposing mental condition that had driven him to those actions. I admit this was an unusual diagnosis, and that was why the case interested me. The first disorder, and its cause, was what I wanted to understand.

"I HAD reason to hope for success. I did not think him incurable. Had he been among those we usually call incurable, he would not have become a hysteric. For example, a paranoia case, suffering from very logically systematized delusions, may kill—but after killing he needs no new defense. His defense is these *same* delusions, which are realities to him. He explains how Mr. X was plotting his death, or was bought by the devil, and therefore had to be killed. He has no need to retreat from the world or himself because of his action; if he killed X who was about to kill him, why should he be shocked by his deed?

"Do you see what I mean? Hysteria is pure *passive defense*—the hysteric does not kill, he defends himself by hysteria. If Hammond killed, he could not have been a hysteric when he did it. That meant that the act of killing, and his realization of it, had changed him. And since the incurable psychoses that result, sometimes, in murder do *not* change after the murder, it meant almost certainly that he had not been suffering from one of those psychoses. That gave me great hope.

"You may ask: could he not have been quite normal when he committed the murders, and then, realizing what he had done, he was shocked into hysteria? This question I answered at the trial. A man who becomes shocked into hysteria by the realization of what he has done is a man who did not understand what he was doing. A man who does not understand what he is doing is not normal.

"You may ask: could he not have been shocked by some unexpected result of a murder he planned while still quite normal? Yes, that is possible. But where are we to seek this unexpected result? What happened to him after the murders that was unexpected? He had already killed his wife and Miss Gray. Now he killed two more people. What could have happened after that to shock him? We knew of nothing, and it would be unprofitable to pursue those lines along which we were most ignorant. There was evidence that he was already abnormal when he committed the murders, and these were the lines along which I worked.

"There was the question of faking, of course. Certain kinds of fakes may be attempted with some success. Fakes call for detailed knowledge, great presence of mind, and almost superhuman discipline. We observe suspected fakers from hidden places. The true psychotic acts more fantastically when he is alone; the simulated one soon finds it intolerable to maintain his act constantly. Hammond was watched 24 hours a day. In addition, he had symptoms which cannot be faked; contracture, for instance. In every way he conformed to a diagnosis of hysteria. The District Attorney chose to ignore much of the medical evidence and decided to claim a fake. Of course, he

is subject to elections and the case had the public white hot. Also, it is not difficult to find doctors to support any thesis. The Hindu *fakir* suspends breathing, heart action, even bleeding—so doctors can be found who will ignore hysterical paralysis of six eyeball muscles. For myself, I knew Hammond was no fake, but the case was nevertheless paradoxical.

"I wish to point this out most carefully, since it shows how unusual the case was from the start. I state it again, briefly: Hysteria is a form of subconscious passive defense against a violent emotional shock. A psychotic does not become a hysteric if he murders, because he already has his own systematized defense. A normal man who murders and understands what he is doing, anticipates the result—therefore it should not be a shock and he should have no need for hysteria as a defense. Hammond, however, appeared to be a hysteric. That should mean that he was shocked by the murders, which in turn should mean that he did not understand what he was doing. Yet the only cases which may commit murder, without understanding what they are doing, are psychotics.

"You see the paradox? Of course, I speak in statistical terms, and the statistics also include great exceptions. That Hammond was such an exception was one possibility, I realized. The other possibility was that he had committed the murders as a normal man, and some unexpected result of his actions had shocked him into hysteria. Because there was no evidence to support this at all, I practically ruled out this second possibility. However, I felt that if I had any success with Hammond, I would know the answer one day.

"WHEN Hammond first came to my sanitarium the worse phases of shock had subsided. You remember I made extensive inquiries and tried to learn as much as I could about my patient's background and personality. Psychotherapy is a long process. It is based on talks with the patient, and we hope that these talks will bring to the surface those conflicts which brought on hysteria as a way out. We must then devise ways and means of changing the patient's habits and motivations—sometimes we change the total personality. At the beginning, naturally, it was almost impossible to talk with Hammond.

"He was an occasional somnambulist. I watched him a few times. He would walk very slowly, then stop as if he was listening and gradually he would recoil, as if he heard something that *slowly* frightened him. Later I found out that he had no recollection of these occasions. He was also subject to convulsive attacks. I attempted to catalogue the instances, to see if the causes were constant or related. It was almost hopeless at first. The pattern seemed too generalized, as if his subconscious could take any event and find an exciting cause in it. Then I had some success.

"Twice he had attacks on occasions when he was taken for a walk along the river bank. The convulsions came when his shoes touched mud. But this was not all. We have an electric organ in the study of the sanitarium, and concerts are given regularly. Once the organ needed repairs, and while the repairs were being made, Hammond had an attack. After that he had an attack when he heard a train whistle late at night. I related these instances and tried an experiment. I played a deep, low chord that might be called mournful, and he had convulsions again. The repairman, you see, and the train whistle had both hit the same chord.

"Then he seemed to get worse. The original stimulii brought new associations. The sight of mud was enough to set him off, or the sound of the organ, no matter what sound. Then water and other liquids, and even humming and whistling began to affect him. So for two weeks I isolated him in the hill cottage and spent hours with him every day, and little by little he began to talk to me. From that day on, from the first time he answered a question that necessitated reflection, he began to make progress.

"Then, a week later a surprising thing happened. In all our talks we were never personal, and he had always been reserved with me. Sometimes I felt his attitude toward me was that of a man forced into distasteful intimacy with a fellow passenger on a train—from which the only retreat was a boorish silence, and this he had obviously decided against. That in itself was unusual because hysterics generally show a desire for sympathy and attention. Furthermore, if you ask them to talk, they love to, because they are highly suggestible. But on this day when he seemed quite frank and I thought his behavior more typical, he asked if I would mind his asking some questions which might appear odd to me. Of course I encouraged him, and he asked me, one after another: 'Where am I? Is this a hospital of some sort? Are you a doctor? Why am I here?'

"I don't know if you understand why this was so surprising. Hysteria is not a disorder, usually, which affects the patient's insight, or his knowledge of his surroundings. Hysterics almost always know where they are and why. Even manic-depressives, except while suffering an attack, know. Schizophrenics are apathetic, paranoia cases may demand to be released, but these are psychotics. You see? I could understand such questions from a depressive during a lucid interval after a long attack, or from a rare schizophrenic, but not from him.

"THAT day marked the beginning of our personal talks. I told him where he was, that I was his doctor, but not too much of why he was there. I simply said he was under my care because he had been mentally ill and was now recovering. Then, gradually, I began to uncover his past life. We talked of his childhood, his adolescence, maturity his work, his friends. And always, whenever there was a reference to anyone who had been involved in any way with the tragedy, or to any time after he met Shilling again—there was a complete blank.

"It was a remarkable fugue—a fugue is an amnesia for certain events, or for certain people. If I mentioned you, or anyone who had known Shilling or had been in the houseboat, he remembered nothing. He did not remember his wife, her sister, Jean Lowell, or even getting married. If I mentioned anything at all that happened after the first week of July 1941, he did not remember. He did not remember the yards. Thus it was a fugue for a certain period, and also for every person he met or saw during that period. And he remembered nothing of what had happened to him later, not the murders, the trial, the State hospital, nothing.

"Of course I did not tell him of the murders or the trial or that he had been committed to an asylum. I discovered these blanks by talking all around them. You see, when a patient has found it necessary to defend himself by so drastic a surgery—a complete cutting out of a section of his past—it is dangerous to try telling him of these things. If you revive the memories, you revive the

stimulus that brought on the hysteria. You must proceed cautiously, one thing at a time, one re-conditioning at a time.

"I knew the danger so I was cautious. I told him that I knew some of the things he had forgotten, and that I would tell him of the things when I thought it wise, because they were going to be hard to hear. He seemed puzzled and disturbed, and why not? His first recent memory was of his third day in the cottage. It was as if he had gone to sleep on a day in July, 1941 and awakened fifteen months later in the cottage. And this too, was unusual, because he had no recollection of his attacks at the sanitarium. But even the little I had told him seemed to be too much. He had periods of moodiness, and when I questioned him, he told me he was trying to remember. Again unusual—most hysterics find relative happiness in the status quo and do not seek their past. He read magazines and newspapers and found out we were at war, which brought more questions. But when I spoke of preceding events like the German summer campaign of 1941, or the attack on Pearl Harbor, he remembered nothing, and this too affected him adversely.

"In fact, by this time he hardly appeared to be a hysteric at all. The somnambulism was gone. The convulsions, from any cause, had stopped. His recovery had been quick, but more amazing, it had come with almost no help from me and without telling me anything. I had not had to get at his roots, so to speak, to discover his conflicts, and then painfully re-condition him. The re-conditioning processes seemed to have occurred almost spontaneously, and I still knew nothing of his conflicts. Except for the fugue and his case history, he seemed quite normal.

"You saw him during that period, but I did not allow you to talk to him. I wasn't sure whether the fugue was so complete that he wouldn't know who you were if he saw you, and I didn't want to risk any sudden shocks. During that time he was more or less emotionally stable, except for short periods of moroseness. I let matters alone, however, at least partly because I wasn't sure how to proceed, but I realized soon after that something had to be done, because he grew increasingly moody. I had a long talk with him one day, and he told me he had reason to think his life was in danger. He didn't know how he knew it, but he seemed to remember that he had once thought he had very little time to live.

"That was bad, of course, but it grew worse. He began to build around this idea. He told me that someone—some *being* was the word he used—had passed a death sentence on him. It occurred to me that he was beginning to remember his trial, and I began to work around to the idea. I was completely astonished when he told me, in so many words, that he remembered having been at a trial, but that he was not talking of that. I asked him why he hadn't told me what he remembered. He refused to answer this question that time and many times thereafter. Instead, when he felt like it, he told me of this death sentence. Some strange being, he said, had sentenced him to death because he had found out about its existence. What he did not remember was how this death sentence was to be executed.

"IT WAS shortly after that time that I asked you to visit him. I wanted to see if he would know you—if there were other things he was recalling and hadn't told me. You remember I warned you he might not know you, and that he recognized you immediately.

He seemed to be all right with you, and he was fine most of the time after that, but he did not give up this story of the being. Of course, I realized that what he was saying paralleled your testimony at the trial, and one day, after I had familiarized myself with the details once more, I asked him if it was the Thing he feared. He admitted it immediately, and thus began a new phase in his recovery. I wasn't sure what it was.

"During this period he told me many of the things he later wrote in his diary. He told them to me without connecting them, and I was never quite able to piece them together, nor could I persuade him to do so. He was willing to talk, but he was not at all suggestible. Moreover, he insisted there were definite relationships among all the things he told me, that if I understood the basis, I would understand how logical the whole thing was. In all these things, you must realize, he was behaving like a typical case of paranoia.

"He had singled himself out as the one person alive who knew about the Thing, a form of the delusion of grandeur. The corollary was there too; the Thing was persecuting him, by reason of its unfulfilled death sentence. He no longer had to tell me everything he remembered for me to know that his memory was slowly coming back—I could tell from the way his delusions grew more and more systematized. He told me what he wanted to, and remained silent and hostile at other times.

"I was at a loss. Paranoia develops slowly, and it was always possible that that was what was happening to him. Then, late one night, he woke me with his screaming. He had had auditory hallucinations — he thought he had heard this Thing talking to him, but *he knew* it was an hallucination, and that was why he screamed! He told me he was afraid he was losing his sanity! Do you see how involved all this was? Hallucinations are symptomatic of schizophrenics or manic-depressives. Here was a paranoia with auditory hallucinations—and complete insight!

"I am putting labels on these things, but labels are nonsense if one allows them to interfere with one's thinking. He did not confuse me because he didn't conform to labels, but because he didn't conform to anything in my experience. These labels and symptoms are like individual notes: the inexperienced listener hears notes; the musician gathers the melody. I was not confused by an occasional discord which might well harmonize with the whole—I was bewildered by an intricate cacaphony that offered no meaning whatever.

"This was Elliot Hammond's condition for many months. The final change came within the last two months or so. One day he asked me to tell him the things I had promised to tell one day, when he would have the moral strength to face them. What were these things? They were the story of his crimes, the fact that he had murdered his wife, his best friend, a girl he had loved, a girl he hardly knew. I postponed telling him. I was almost certain he knew everything I could tell him, but as long as he wasn't sure, I thought I had some bargaining power with him. I made a bargain with him. If he would tell me everything he remembered, I would fill in the rest for him.

"He refused at first. Then, little by little, he came to me. He had to tell me, he had to tell someone, because he was beginning to forget all the things that had come back to him, and he felt it was terribly important that these things be known. What a strange affair! He was worried because he was

forgetting the details of his delusions! That was the chance I needed. I suggested that he write everything down in a sort of narrative, doing a little each day. The idea struck him, and for some time he spoke of the project as his diary of the past, but he kept putting it off. You saw him for the last time during that period, when he told you he intended to write this diary.

"THEN, on October 30th—the day I wrote you—he started his diary. He came to me and told he he had begun, and made his request for the box he had left at Tarpon Road, and he told me enough of the story to make it imperative to try to get that box, if there was such a thing. That was when I wrote you.

"This box, you see, was the cornerstone of his delusions. It explained everything to him. The details surrounding the story of this box were so plain and unprepossessing—that is, the story of how he had left it in that curio shop—that I felt there was a good chance it existed. I felt that once I had this box I could attack and disprove the basis of his delusions. This was in itself an optimistic hope, because in true paranoia there is no chance of influencing the patient—so you see I did not let labels get in my way. As it began to turn out, my hopes were not unjustified. I was making progress until the very end.

"You had difficulty getting this box, but I did not wait for it. As I read the diary, I felt the urgency of which Hammond wrote. He had told me enough even before he began the diary for me to understand some of his symbols—even to suspect the ultimate meaning of the box. I attacked his delusions from that basis, as if I hadn't been reading the diary, later without such pretense but without admitting anything, to see how it affected him. He hinted at it and sometimes mentioned it in the diary. He knew and resented it a little, but it didn't really matter to him until he was close to the end. There he reached an impasse, beyond which he had decided I would not read until he had satisfied himself whether or not his story was true or a delusion. There was a terrible secret behind it, you see, and I did not understand it until I finally read those sections of the diary he had kept from me the last two days when he was closeted in his room.

"The box, you see, was the cornerstone. He began to fear it from the day I told him you were bringing it. Until then, apparently, he himself was not sure it existed, because he had become unsure of his whole story. This was due partly to our talks, but only partly. The rest was due to a large residuum of doubt which he never really dissolved. But let me explain this, as I finally understood it, from what he wrote. It is not readily apparent in the diary—it is barely mentioned, and I might have missed it had I not known something of it beforehand.

"Maria, he wrote, died after she opened the box. He does not tell us why he took the box with him when he went to the yards that last night. But after he set off the dynamite, something happened. He wrote: 'I do not know if the Thing was destroyed. You have undermined my memory. I cannot unravel the tangled skeins of half-dreams; I cannot reconcile your talks about my imagination and its disorders with *the dim recollection of a sentence that was passed on me, as it was passed on Maria.*' It would appear, therefore, that he seemed to remember that the Thing was not destroyed, and that the Thing passed the same sentence on

him. And that meant that *the box was again to be the instrument of final death!*

"DO YOU understand his fears now? On the one hand, he felt that everything he thought he remembered was a delusion, as I said it was, and as it appeared to him even while he was reading what he wrote. He was struggling to overthrow these delusions. But on the other hand, they were so strong, they seemed so true, that he just couldn't discount them without one last proof. He had that proof in mind before he began to write—it was the memory, or the delusion of that box.

"He distrusted the box itself because he could not remember what was in it. He was ready to give up at the very end. He wrote: 'You have won your battle. I read and read again these words and am confounded by their reality. You have found the box, but it will win your battle and you know it. The wonder of it is that there ever was a box. And if there was not, *you would have managed to provide one*. We understand each other, Schumer. You have a box and you wait for my surrender.' In other words, he wasn't even sure that the box I was going to show him was the one he thought he remembered! He had no way to check on anything any more.

Only the final test remained, and he was sure he would lose. He wrote: 'All these things are not true and never were . . . Diary of a delusion . . . If I believed the things in it, I could not write them. I would dread Reed's coming tonight. Isn't he bringing me the final test? And if Schumer suspected that was what I considered it, I doubt if he would share my eagerness.'

"The final test, then, was for him to look into the box and live. He had put it thus: 'I have said I could not continue to believe what I did and live.' And if he did live, his surrender was to be complete. He already anticipated it when he wrote: '. . . To what world do you lead me? You take me from this one of nightmare, the prison of my own mind, and free me. And now I will be free to wander in search of answers that only my world supplied so long? . . . What will you tell me of Maria? . . . What have you to tell me that needs my strength? . . .'

"You see, I had never told him the story the world believed—that he had killed his wife and the others, but he knew he was going to hear things that would necessitate a complete reorientation. His final shot was a last try to hold on to his delusions. He wrote what had happened to Katherine Gray, believing she had been destroyed. If this proved to be true—that is, to coincide with the facts we believed—he felt it offered at least one proof of the truth of his story. Of course, even if the body had been destroyed, this revelation would have told us nothing except that she had been blown to bits, either dead or alive. It could not prove his story. Nothing could prove his story.

"Yes, nothing could prove it. Hammond looked into the box and died, but that doesn't prove his story. I have other ideas. I'm not sure what I think and I intend to keep thinking. But if I were asked today if I felt certain of any of my diagnoses of Elliot Hammond, I would have to say no. I am no longer sure that he was a hysteric. Hysterics do not cure themselves. Paranoias are not killed by their delusions. A great, almost unbelievable coincidence? Perhaps. And perhaps there is another answer—perhaps he was never really abnormal, the way I mean it—perhaps he was never really insane, the way you mean it. . . ."



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

WE ARE not quite done with Mr. Schumer, but let us see where we are now. Let us review the whole structure of this collected manuscript, briefly, to see where we stand and how we got here. For I have brought you to this point very carefully, duplicating the processes I went through to get there. It's a little mad, perhaps, but there's a method in it.

This entire manuscript can be divided into two parts. The first half is a presentation of the story itself. The second half is an examination of the story; an inquiry and three hypotheses. The first half is made up of Hammond's diary, cut apart to allow inserts relevant to the story of the diary. These inserts are letters, notes by me, news clippings, trial excerpts. I admit arranging them so as to provide a little suspense, because after all, you are a reader and I am a writer, and I have certain responsibilities toward you, and one of them is to entertain you.

When the diary ends, I include news clippings that continue the story of Elliot Hammond after he was found guilty. I have included most of the District Attorney's summation of the case to the jury, to show you how Hammond's facts were interpreted by others. This section is a sort of interlude between the first and second halves. It ends when I tell you when and how Hammond died, and it tells you that these circumstances were such that I could not stop thinking about them.

Then the second half begins. It is a sort of odyssey of my own mental peregrinations, which led to three possible theories. The first hypothesis is the State's case. It has been presented in the District Attorney's summation. Now I examine it and find much fault with it; it does not convince me, it does not answer many questions I consider important.

I go on to the second hypothesis: that Hammond's story is true. First I reconstruct his story, which is not easy to understand without study. I show how it answers practically every question I asked of the first hypothesis. Astonishing as this is, I admit it is beyond belief, which is another way of saying it is untrue.

This brings me to examine, in its turn, the second hypothesis. I say we must decide, from what evidence we have, whether it is untrue by design or accident—a fake or a mistake. I take the premise that it is a fake and list four conditions that must obtain if this is so. The four are: Hammond's motive for a fake; his familiarity with details; the time to work out the story; necessary doubt of Hammond's insanity.

I present the best possible interpretations, and find that the first three conditions appear to be present. The fourth one is quite long. It is almost a clinical history of Hammond, and it shows that Dr. Schumer had great doubts about Hammond's "insanity" —which supplies the fourth condition.

That brings us up to date. At this point we seem to have a case that supports a denial of the second hypothesis—that the diary is true—and offers instead to back up the assumption of a deliberate fake. If this were so, the deliberate fake would be my Third Hypothesis, which it is not.

THE Third Hypothesis is that the diary's story is a *mistake*. That means I must now disprove the assumption of fake (which, if you are still with me, is a disproof of a disproof, and sounds more complicated than it really is). I intend to do this quickly, by examining two of the four conditions which support the assumption of fake. The two are: Hammond's motive and doubt of his insanity.

After some questions and re-arranging of facts, we finally succeeded in giving Hammond a motive for writing a deliberate fake. I stated it: "His motive is to concoct a story that dovetails with the one he originally planted with me, as continued evidence that he was legally insane." In other words, it is an elaborate continuation of his act. That sounds all right until we ask ourselves why the devil he had to continue his act along such lines?

The truth is that *he really had no need to write his diary*. What did it do for him? It continued his act? He could have done that without going to the extreme and unnecessary lengths of writing a story that had an answer to every question in the State's case. If he pretended amnesia for some things, why not for others which would make it unnecessary for him to bother with minute details? He could have had very

convenient lapses in the writing, even after he undertook it, couldn't he? He could just as easily have written a wild story that did *not* coincide with a few of the facts. If he was insane, why should he need any kind of logic that would appeal to *us?* Pretending insanity, he could stand by his own logic. If the only purpose this diary was to serve was proof of continued insanity, that could have been done without such labor. Nor was it necessary, to begin with.

As for the doubts about his insanity—do we still assume he was faking everything? You'll get no support for that idea from Dr. Schumer. The Doctor may be uncertain of the meaning of some of the symptoms he saw, but some of these symptoms are themselves almost indisputable evidence against the theory of fake. Would-be fakers seldom undertake to play a hysteric, but no matter what they're playing, it's pretty difficult to fake such things as the contraction of involuntary eyeball muscles, or violent convulsions, or a dramatic somnambulism that has to stand up under clever, tricky tests. It may not have been hysteria—or it may have been that, and there were other complicating factors. As a matter of fact, that's what Dr. Schumer thinks today. The one thing the Doctor does *not* think is that Hammond faked anything.

Of course, last of all, if you still think Hammond and his story a fake, how will you explain his death? I don't think there is any really satisfactory explanation, including the one toward which I incline, but can you maintain that he killed himself with his own fake? I haven't played too heavily on that fact so far because I have my own theories, but what about it? Knowing what you know now, what do you make of the way Hammond died?

I don't think you can believe the fake, unless you also believe that Hammond's sudden death was a coincidence that bolstered an otherwise hopeless case. Such a coincidence—a man dying exactly as he feared and predicted he might—especially under the fantastically strange conditions surrounding the coincidence, would certainly rank impossibly high in anybody's book. In my opinion, it would leave you with the poorest of these many possible explanations.

Any one of the explanations is possible, I repeat, but what I have been looking for is the possibility with the highest index of probability. So where are we? If, as I think, we've ruled out the assumption of a fake, we are left with the last,

THE THIRD HYPOTHESIS

ACCORDING to this hypothesis, Hammond's story is untrue by accident. *It is not deliberately false.* Circumstances may have combined in such a way as to make Hammond himself believe a story which is untrue. He may be telling us the absolute truth, as he knows it, and everything he tells us may be untrue.

In our discussions, Dr. Schumer and I (and John Broome, I might add) reached this point. We set out to test it, as we had the others. How did it add up?

In the first place, as soon as we made this assumption, we saw that we had a new possible interpretation of some of the things in the diary. For example, might not Hammond's repeated statements that he could hardly believe what he was writing—might these not have been due to some dim inkling of Hammond's that *something else except memory had tricked him?* Is there anything in the diary that points to such an inkling?

Let me put it this way: Hammond had built a story of solid, logical construction. Dr. Schumer's talks made him doubt his story sometimes, but he kept writing it until it was finished. He admitted the possibility of delusions, but these admissions were themselves very strange. A man with a logical story based on delusion can practically never be *talked* out of his delusions. So what made Hammond so accessible to suggestion? Did he have any other reasons for doubting his own story, except the Doctor's insistence that it was based on delusion?

Thus approached, the diary bears new fruit. The comment to page 72 has already advanced the theory of hypnosis, and I have mentioned it in other places. Let me quote some of the evidence.

Over and over, Hammond writes of *the grey iris of an eye.* He mentions it at the very start of his diary, one of four images. He writes of: ". . . a sound more clear than sound . . . the iris of a grey eye contracting . . . a sun-drenched bubble of mud exploding . . . the cold gleam of imagined moonlight on rusting metal . . ." Three of these images are quickly understood—in a sense they represent the very heart of Hammond's story. They are symbols of the whole: the sound is the Thing; the mud is

the hot creator of life; the metal was life itself, as well as the scene for most of the story. Why did Hammond include *the grey iris of an eye* among these most important symbols? What meaning did it have for him?

This emphasis on eyes appears only in connection with Shilling. The only other reference to eyes belongs to Maria, who, when she was near death, had ". . . fire dying in sightless eyes . . ." and who was described in another place as having eyes "dark as jewels." So the eyes are always Shilling's. "I couldn't look into his eyes," Hammond wrote. "They seemed to pierce my brain."

Going further, in what particular part of the story does Hammond keep talking about Shilling's eyes? Almost entirely in one section—the recounting of the visit Shilling made to Hammond's bed, the day he lay ill and feverish. And in that same section we find Hammond writing of their conversation in a vein found nowhere else. The footnote says: "Now a new note is evident. Hammond is reviewing the conversation, and though he mentions the unreality of what they discussed, he now seems to think of it as something unreal *even at that time*." In other words, he seems to imply that his delusions are not a later occurrence, but were already founded in what happened then. To continue: "Now he writes with ironic wonder that he believed in such 'vagaries' and 'fantasies' . . . and the *cycle* comes in for special contempt . . ." He asks: "What magic power lay in the projection, to make me believe such fanstasies?" The answer has already been given: "I believed because I had to, but I knew I was lost. I saw it in that eye."

I WAS quoting Dr. Schumer when I wrote, in that comment: "When we remember that Hammond was writing under a great emotional strain, and that much of what he wrote was in literal sense a sub-conscious outpouring—a sub-conscious suspicion becomes a more likely theory." Of what was Hammond suspicious, then? The apparent answer is that he was suspicious of everything Shilling told him: "Of this, the cycle. Most, muchly, muchmosted, mostmuchly and in the main, of the cycle, friend of the poor, comforter of the blind and timid, resource of the infirm. All this the cycle. A barren tale now, it appears, banal and diluted nonsense. . . . And yet," he asks, "at the time, what a formidable adversary among the enemy hosts at the disposal of the murderer, though why?" *Though why*, Hammond asks, wondering what made a tale of nonsense so formidable, among the many means at the murderer's disposal.

Who is he calling the murderer? Obviously he means Shilling. When Shilling comes to beg for help, Hammond writes of Shilling's eyes, of ". . . their pale depths brimming with invisible calculation, the murderous intent sunken from sight . . ." Again, he says that Shilling was ". . . helpless, I thought, while his hands were poised for the plunge . . ." And if we go further with these assumptions, we find new meaning in Hammond's strangely symbolic story of the murderer and the sleeper. If the murderer is Shilling, clearly then, the sleeper must be Hammond.

Notice how well the idea of a "sleeper" fits the condition of someone under hypnosis! But it only begins there. Subsequent development of this idea, somewhat along the lines of dream-analysis, ends with startling results. "Viewed as a subconscious outpouring," says Dr. Schumer, "we proceed step by step to construct an amazing indictment of Shilling.

"The sleeper," says the Doctor, "is certainly Hammond. He lies 'in a dreamless haunted slumber . . . in a room with no windows, behind an iron door'—the condition of a man under deep hypnosis, who is not free to exercise perception or movement. But his portrait hangs overhead on a wall. It 'breathes in unison with his broken rhythms' and is 'alarmed and wakeful.' May we not assume this portrait is the symbol for the subconscious of the sleeper? The subconscious lives with us, never sleeping, possessor of our deepest fears. Then the murderer enters and tears out the sleeper's heart. What is the meaning of this act? It is an act which is not in itself fatal, for the sleeper does not die as a result of the act alone; even when the parable ends, the sleeper is not dead. But it is something that leaves the sleeper in a state more helpless than he was even asleep. Now he can do nothing. He cannot even understand what has happened to him!

"This terrible crime has rendered the sleeper harmless, but the *subconscious* is still highly dangerous. Hammond wrote: 'The

portrait witnessed everything, screaming inaudibly.' Just so does the subconscious witness everything, though its screams remain unheard. Now the murderer must destroy the subconscious. He stuffs the heart into the portrait's mouth and throws the whole thing away. Hypnotism alone was insufficient for Shilling—so he tried to destroy Hammond entirely, but still not by killing him! The evidence of the crime is lost—a stray dog eats it just when people begin to look for it. In other words, some sort of accident prevents the truth from being found out. Finally 'the murderer comes in to see him, wringing his hands, weeping as he vows to save him'—precisely as Shilling came to see Hammond! It remains for us to find the meaning of the heart itself, to understand fully the implications of this story, but surely there is enough here already. . . ."

To my mind, such analyses, for all their scientific bases, seem to have a greater literary than practical value, and I was unconvinced. But Dr. Schumer then went on to an examination of Hammond's facts, as I now do, with practical and confirming results.

WHAT was Shilling's plan, as told to us by Hammond? The Thing was supposedly at the nadir of its influence, a matter of a "cycle", and this had enabled Shilling to plan the Thing's destruction. Shilling was to get dynamite, and to plant it in the vicinity of the Thing, apparently very close to the houseboat. More dynamite was to be planted under the corpse of Kathy Gray, and both places were connected by a single, joint wire to the mechanism which would set it off. Hammond was to get to the yards late, after the others had gone, and to give Shilling a pre-arranged signal at a pre-arranged time. This would enable Shilling to get out of the dangerous area before the dynamite went off. It was expected that the blast would bring the police, and a story had been prepared; the blast would be blamed on some of the guests who were to be at the party that day, supposedly a frightful practical joke by people too drunk to know what they were doing. But since the explosion would have hurt no one, and the culprits would be impossible to establish, any resulting investigation could do little harm.

The reader may recall I examined this plan before. Because I did so for a different purpose, I forebore pointing out the manifest absurdities of the plan, saving that task for inclusion here.

First, what help did Shilling need in such a plan? All Hammond had to do was depress a lever. Are we to believe Shilling came to beg and plead Hammond's help—help that amounted to depressing a lever? Second, the explosion was not to occur until *after* the party guests had left—yet the near-disaster was to be blamed on them! Third, guests or no, could they possibly expect the police to believe such a story? Wouldn't the guests unanimously, consistently, deny it? Could all have been expected to get so drunk that no one could establish the whereabouts of others? Wouldn't drunks leave all sorts of traces, including fingerprints? How would the absence of such marks be explained? Fourth, how would Hammond explain his late arrival at the yards, for he made no attempt to hide it.

No—from start to finish the plan was nonsense. It would be a miserable failure for a faker; it is so bad we are inclined to believe he is telling the truth. You may ask whether a clever faker couldn't anticipate just this reaction from us. The answer, of course, must be yes, but we have already see how the theory of fake falls apart. Now, what about the theory of hypnosis? Why should a story, a plan, be necessary for a man under hypnosis?

More important, what was really behind the plan? For, if Hammond's suspicions were correct, the plan must have had an object not told Hammond but which he nevertheless suspected. To see what Shilling's motive might really have been, let us assume the plan—as he designed it—had actually gone through, and see what the results could have been.

We know that Shilling was expecting Hammond, but that he allowed Jean Lowell to remain. We can assume that he kept her there, when she might quite naturally have left earlier with friends, because he wanted her to stay. Later Hammond would arrive, and be seen arriving. He would go to his appointed place, wait for the appointed time, give the warning signal to Shilling, then set off the explosion. Shilling would have taken Jean to a place of safety and the explosion would have harmed neither. The police would come—and find

what? *They would find Hammond, or evidence that Hammond had been there. They would find he had made an attempt to murder Shilling and Jean Lowell. They would find dynamite that had not gone off under the body of Kathy Gray. In Hammond's home, they would find Maria dead, with signs of strangulation, the same as Kathy.*

And Shilling would be completely free—for he could then utilize his alibi, already planted with Mulvaney, that Kathy had left with Hammond the night she was murdered. Shilling would not need to fear the possibility of Stapley testifying that he had seen Kathy Gray alive after Hammond left. *For once Hammond was connected to the murder of Maria and the attempt to murder Shilling and Jean, nothing Stapley could say would save Hammond. In other words, the successful execution of the plan would result in Hammond being held for two murders, and for attempted murder of two more people.*

It will be seen, I trust, that this supposed result is based on the supposition of Maria's death other than by Hammond, and that the same holds for Kathy. But if we could not believe Hammond's story of how these two women were killed, what alternative does the theory of hypnotism give us?

WHEN Dr. Schumer and I reached this point in our theorizing, we realized we could find an explanation for anything, in terms of theory. We had a theory—hypnotism—but it was like a paper bag; we could fill it with concrete or air. We didn't think, anymore, that we were going to get much concrete, but we wanted more than air. What we needed was some tangible evidence, however small, that we had more than just a theory.

So here we gave up for awhile. It bothered the Doctor and it bothered me. I'd catch myself thinking about it while I was working. Sometimes it would be my last thought before I fell asleep. A few weeks later I talked it over with John Broome. John's wife, Peggy, had once worked as a librarian for the Continental Detective Agency, and she had told John stories of their work and efficiency. When I returned to the city, I had decided to have a try at tracing the missing years in Jim Shilling's life.

I got together everything anyone knew about Shilling. I collected cards and letters, or copies, from people he'd written in the three years he had been wandering. I took all this and four sheets of notes to the New York office of Continental and asked them to fill in the blanks. It was a despairing gesture, but I had to do it.

That was in the first week of January of this year, 1944. In less than a month I began to keep my fingers crossed. Things were turning up that had me dizzy, things that were hardly credible. I sat tight, waiting.

They discovered that Shilling had left the country in 1938, shipping as assistant steward aboard the *President Buchanan*, a coastal liner that went from New York to Cuba and South America. The ship sailed May 8, 1938. On May 23, they hit Rio de Janeiro and Shilling packed his bags and vanished. On August 24, the American consul at Porte Alegre, a thousand miles down the coast of Brazil from Rio, was told of an American citizen who had been admitted to the hospital, suffering from amnesia. The amnesia lifted while he was in the hospital and he took the police to the place he'd lived, where he had left his possessions. Nothing remained to prove his statement that he was James Shilling. Two days of quiet activity by the police restored his passport, some papers, a typewriter, forty-one dollars, and a hypodermic syringe. The last named article was confiscated. Shilling claimed it was not his, but in the police records it was listed as confiscated.

He crossed the southern border, went to Montivideo and shipped to Rabat, French Morocco, as messman on the freighter *Mercedes*. He jumped ship again, was caught by the *Gendarmerie* on October 17, managed to get a release and was next heard of on October 30, when the Insurgents arrested him in Cadiz, Spain, on no charges. The Embassy freed him and he was allowed to leave on a vessel that went to Faro, Portugal. On January 9, 1939, he was arrested in Aalborg, Denmark, charged with trafficking in morphine. The charge was withdrawn a week later but he was escorted to a ship leaving for Norway. During the short voyage he suffered a nervous breakdown; when the ship docked at Bergen on January 18, he was put in a hospital. On May 26 he was discharged.

THE case history was now unobtainable because of the war, and possibly for

the same reason there was no further record of Shilling until he appeared at the American consulate in Trinidad on September 9. The war had started and all aliens had to register. On September 23, he was sent to a hospital in Trinidad with malaria. He was discharged in ten days and immediately got a visa for Chile. He turned up in Chile in the port of Antofagasta, where he again registered. Here the trail ended, this time for good.

It was as if Jim Shilling had disappeared from the face of the earth for a period of fifteen months. He had been in Antofagasta on October 20th, 1939, and had arrived in New Orleans on a steamer from Haiti on January 23rd, 1941. The time between those two dates was a complete mystery.

Continental's connections had made the job of tracing Shilling a fairly easy one, after the Agency decided what kind of man they were after. They had gone to contacts in the State Dept., convinced that Shilling's trail would be marked by more or less frequent brushes with foreign police and, consequently, American legations. And they had been right—they had been able to put a finger on him six times, at least, within eighteen months. And then, for an almost equal period, they found not the slightest trace of him.

Again and again they went over what they knew, and at my insistence they sent one of their South American operatives to Antofagasta, to try to pick up the trail again. The effort failed, but the operative sent up a report that he believed the man they sought (he had no idea that Shilling was dead) had been connected with a drug ring that had been broken up shortly after Shilling's arrival in Antofagasta. But, no sign of the man. Continental went back to its connections and hammered away, more sure than ever that Shilling could not have stayed out of official hands for so long a time. They dug up more information—indications of Shilling's unofficial encounters with the law, charges of vagrancy, mendicancy, one for assault (fine: 100 pesos), one for immoral behavior (he had wandered about naked one night, dead drunk), one for consorting with swindlers—but all of these concerned the period of which we already knew. Of the other, nothing.

Early in April of this year, I decided it was time to give up. Broome came into the city to see the Continental people with me and then he went to Army headquarters to exchange his farmer's deferment for a commission in the M.P.'s. That evening we sat down and looked over Hammond's diary, which Dr. Schumer had sent down with Broome. It was while we were reading it that the idea struck us, or, I should say, struck me.

Right at the beginning of the diary, entered under October 31, 1943, Hammond mentioned receiving a card from Peru that Shilling had sent him. The entry for November 3rd described Shilling reading aloud the opening chapter of his new book. The chapter had dealt with a small Peruvian monastery along the coast. I had been at the houseboat that day and I remembered Shilling's reading, and the strong impression it had left on me. How stupid I had been! Here I had had positive indications that Shilling had been in Peru—I had had them all along, when nothing in the Continental reports had ever touched Peru!

The next morning John and I went back to the Agency. A report was radioed to Panama and an operative left for Lima. We knew what he was doing. He was checking the Peruvian monasteries to find one that fitted Shilling's description. There were several. The operative left Lima and was gone three weeks. On Friday, April 28th, Continental phoned me to read the radiogram they had received from Lima. It said: *"Full Information Sent Air Mail. Believe Successful."* Five days later the letter arrived.



(TEXT OF LETTER FROM CHARLES JESSUP TO THE NEW YORK OFFICE OF CONTINENTAL DETECTIVE AGENCY)

Hotel El Mirasol
Lima, April 28, 1944

Dear Mike:

I think I have what you wanted and probably more than you bargained for. Neither Rico nor I know what in hell to make of it. Whoever this Shilling is, and whatever line you're after on him, he's bad medicine. He's wanted down here, but they don't know where to look and I didn't tip much. Here's the story.

I lined up four monasteries that

sounded good. When I got to Lima I found your instructions and the pictures waiting for me. I routined two of the monasteries without a lead. The first day I tried the third one, I landed in the local can and had to send for Rico, as you know from him. The whole setup looked like I needed Rico.

This monastery is dedicated to San Stefano, the name of the town right next to it. It stands offshore on the first rise leading to the mountains. It's about halfway between Chancay and Huacho, about forty miles north of Callao and Lima, but it's kind of alone there. A lot of this country is desert, but this section is irrigated and they raise sheep and cattle in the grassland. They got a lot of different kinds of people. Some that work the farms and ranchos are Indians and the mestizo mixed breeds. Then they got the owners and a lot of other dons that own haciendas in the area. This place is so near the big cities that they use it like a seashore resort. So you get queer mixtures of population in San Stefano; and some places very high class right near dives and such. They have different seasons for the farming and the ranchos and the resort angle, so the population changes during the seasons. The monastery is maybe four hundred years old, and the monks are very powerful. They have their own farm and rancho and the dons kick in to keep the place nice. Got the picture? It's a little unusual, I think.

When I hit San Stefano I went straight to the chief of police. I showed him the pictures of Shilling and asked him a few questions. I knew I hit him right off the bat, but this guy tried not to let on. He sent out somebody with an order he wrote on paper and half an hour later a monk came in. He told me later he was like the assistant to the head monk. His name was Brother Rafael. He spoke good English. He looked at the pictures and asked me what I wanted. I told him who I was, but gave him the Panama office and no connection to you, and said I represented some people who wanted to find him. He told me he had known Shilling, only he called him by the name of Raoul Besancon. I didn't give any name, saying I didn't know. The monk said I could have my questions answered by the head monk, but the head monk was in Lima and was expected back very soon. Then he left.

About two minutes later I tried to leave and found out I was under arrest, only it wasn't really arrest. It was police custody on suspicion. The chief told me I was suspected of being a friend of this Besancon and they were going to investigate me. He had no objection to my sending someone to Lima to get hold of the consulate. I had to spend the night in the can and meanwhile I decided it looked as if I could use Rico. The next morning the consulate had somebody down who got me out fast and everybody apologized. The chief went with me to the monastery and spoke to Brother Rafael, but he said I would have to wait for the head monk. I sat down and waited.

Two days later Rico was up from Santiago. When I gave him the dope, he told me he'd been on Shilling's tail in Antofagasta and told me what he knew. There was still nothing doing from the head monk, so Rico put on a dirty shirt and started to nose around. They got a small harbor there where they load small coast ships with stuff they sell elsewhere, and that's where Rico went. He figured there must be a reason Shilling hugs the coast, so maybe ship people would know him. Before he found any reason, Rico found a couple of Indians who recognized the pictures. They hadn't forgotten him in more than four years. They took one look at the pictures and beat it and they didn't come back. That afternoon every Indian around the harbor disappeared. The chief sent for me and told me that Brother Rafael wanted me to come to the monastery.

He knew about Rico. The Indians had gone back to the hills and told their people that a friend of the evil man had come. That's one of the names they called Shilling. The other was devil's son. The Indians had got panicky and left everything to hide in the hills and one of them ran to the monastery and told the monks. Meanwhile this Rafael had sent word about me to the head monk and the answer had come back that it was all right to tell me, seeing I was from the police. First he made me promise to keep away from the Indians. He said they had had a hard time getting them to forget the whole thing.

He told me that Besancon came to the monastery the week before Xmas, 1939. He was sick and hungry. He had holes in his shoes and he wore rags. He said he was Raoul Besancon, a Canadian. The monks took him until he got well. Then he told them he wanted to stay. He told them he had lived a bad life and wanted to start all over. He said he wanted to turn to religion. The monks didn't know what to do. It seems this monastery isn't the kind where the monks all stay inside the place. Like I said, they are sort of in business and they share everything with the people who work for them. So they gave Besancon a job on one of their fishing boats, which was what he wanted. In about a month he was in charge of one of the boats.

He was always quiet and neat in his

habits and he went to church regularly. Then he made some friends among the rich people. January and February are the middle of the summer here, and the dons were at their summer villas with plenty of guests. Somehow Besancon was able to make friends easily and he was invited everywhere. In the daytime he was a fisherman, but at night he was in high society. It went on like that for a couple of months . The monks heard only nice things about him for awhile and they figured he was a well educated man and finding a new place in the world for himself. Then they began to hear other things. Some of the Indians told the monks that Besancon had an evil smell and that he worshipped evil gods.

Brother Rafael said that if they hadn't mentioned the evil smell, the monks might have paid attention to the stories. But the monks knew the smell. It was something very sweet, almost overpowering. You could smell it the minute Besancon came into a room and it was there after he left. But they figured it was a sort of perfume, like many of the dons used, only more powerful. The devil worshipping was all a lot of rumors. No Indian that came to the monks said he had seen it himself, but he knew it from other Indians back in the hills, around the coco plantations. Around July they heard of wild doings on one of the coco plantations. The Indians there had killed the overseer and his family and ran off. The Indians around San Stefano said it was all Besancon's doings.

Late in July two monks set off into the hills to see what was going on. They didn't come back, and a month later some half crazy mestizos were found wearing their robes. The police got busy. They went in and came back with stories that a whole village in the interior was crazy, that Indians had tried to kill them, and so on. So more police went in, but they couldn't figure it out. It looked like something for doctors to investigate and they got some to come, but just then the whole thing was called off. It was Spring again and the dons were coming out and there were a lot of parties.

But the monks went to Lima and raised a fuss that got the investigation going again. Then, one Sunday afternoon, Besancon was brought to San Stefano, under arrest. Secret police had caught him the night before near the Indian village. There were also some young girls from prominent families mixed up in it, but the whole thing was kept secret, including the charges. Besancon was to be taken to Lima the next day, but that night he disappeared. There was a lot of undercover work after that but nothing came of it. That was in November, 1940. Most of the story never leaked out. Most residents of the town don't know about it unless they have relatives who were mixed up in it and the monks forbid them to talk about it. The monks got what they know from the Indians.

Now, there's two angles to this Besancon-Shilling. One is the business end. He was mixed up with a ring of dope smugglers. He was a kind of clearing house. He used his fishing boat to contact others along the coast. The ring delivered to him and he passed back what was needed, but he had the main cache. The police found about fifty pounds of morphine and heroin in the place he lived, also a lot of chloral. There was supposed to be a lot of money hidden away too. The police were searching the coast all that time, but they never figured on looking for dope in a monastery boat. The Indians on the boat were scared stiff of him, as I will try to explain.

Then he had a side racket. He was peddling the stuff among rich addicts and others who were taking to it. The monks figure some of these people used their influence to call off the first investigation because Besancon got them to. They also figure these people got him bought out of jail and hustled him out of the country before he could be pumped. Or else he was knocked off quietly. There may be a tie-up between him and the July riots that year, but nobody is sure. The Indians say this white overseer found out what Besancon was doing and Besancon got the Indians to kill him. The coco plantation may be an angle, but it's just a quick guess because I happen to remember they get cocaine from coco.

The other angle to this Shilling is the crazy one. He was up to something with the Indians but no one knows exactly what. They had doctors watching him that night and they talked to him later. They decided he was crazy. This Brother Rafael says that Besancon had the Indians worshipping an iron god and that he had a great influence over the Indians. The doctors and the police told the monks a slightly different story. They say he had a metal contraption with batteries and lights and that he could practically hypnotize these Indians with it. But he also began to branch out later and brought in these girls from wealthy Peruvian families. He got these people to come to a place in the hills where they worshipped his thingamajig. He smashed it when the police closed in. They found parts for another one in his place, but couldn't figure out how to put it together.

This Brother Rafael says that some of the girls went insane later, and they found the same thing among the

Indians. The doctors told the monks that Besancon had been insane, but the monks aren't sure. The sure thing seems to be that Besancon-Shilling used chloral for himself. That was supposed to give him that sickening sweet smell.

There it is, Mike. I don't know what it adds up to, but maybe you do. If there is anything more doing on this Shilling, I'd like to know, unless it's in the Confid file. Seems to me if he is alive he must be doing something worth hearing about.

Yours,

Charlie Jessup

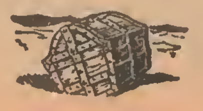


(COMMENT BY AUTHOR)

NO COMMENT of mine is needed here. It would be hard for me adequately to describe my reactions to the Continental report. And Dr. Schumer, accustomed as he is to what I consider the weird side of life, was affected much the same way. I've had time to get used to it while I put this manuscript together, but I don't know if one can get used to an unfinished story like this one.

For it is unfinished, of course. This we have and this we know. Compared to what we don't know, it's not much—but it is enough for our hypothesis. I have tried to present it here in a dialogue between Dr. Schumer and myself, which I combined and edited from notes of several talks we had. There were others present at some of these talks, but for the sake of simplicity I have confined the active roles to just we two.

The point of departure for this dialogue was my remarking to Dr. Schumer that I had decided we would never understand what had happened to Hammond, no matter what we found out about Shilling. It was one of the few instances I ever saw the Doctor look disgusted.—D.V.R.



(DISCUSSION BETWEEN DR. LEOPOLD SCHUMER AND DAVID V. REED)

"IT IS foolish to hope for full understanding of something of this nature," said the Doctor. "But if we are to try, our hopes must be based on the attempt to understand *Shilling*, not Hammond, as you still think."

"Understand Shilling? The more we found about him, the less we really knew," I said. "Sometimes I've wondered if we were talking about the same man, the Jim Shilling I knew."

"Exactly. Already we know something very important. We recognize at once that the Shilling known to you and others was but one facet of the man. Our discoveries show us other facets, present facts—and these facts built a new man for us. These facts, added to what is in the diary, also lead us to logical deductions."

"For example?"

"For example, we know that Shilling was depressed for a long time after his book was published. He couldn't write again—"

"I think that kind of frustration is quite common," I said.

"It is, but most people readjust themselves. If they do not, they continue to be unhappy, and sometimes they become institutionalized patients. In the early stages, such people often go to psychiatrists and they may be helped. It is quite possible that Shilling consulted a doctor and was advised to try a change—a long sea voyage, say. You know, doctors prescribe sea voyages outside the movies too. Or else he did it on his own initiative. He was educated and introspective enough to have been very well aware of what was happening to him. Writers, especially, believe firmly in the therapeutic value of change."

"Yes, I've heard it referred to as 're-

filling the dry well' or 'recharging the battery?' So he took the first voyage to get away?"

"To leave the scene of his frustrations and attempt a readjustment. Hammond wrote of Shilling's slow disintegration. At the end of two years, Shilling was a desperately unhappy man. He had no funds, so he took a job as assistant steward on a liner."

"And he quit because he was still unhappy?"

"Possibly even more unhappy, I would say. The job was too menial for a man who had been a minor literary celebrity two years before. By the time the ship reached Rio, he had enough. He abandoned the ship and drifted south, driven by unhappiness. Three months later he had an attack of temporary amnesia. It was a characteristic ailment. Amnesia is often a symptom of neurosis. The motivation is obvious—the man seeks to forget his troubles together with his identity. The motivation is not conscious, of course, but if the amnesia persists, the troubles are gone; it fails, the inner conflict resumes."

"And his amnesia lifted fairly quickly," I said.

"Yes. But before then he had already taken other, conscious steps to forget his misery, to dull the mental anguish. A psychologic unbalance can quickly be compensated for by the use of narcotics, and we have later evidence that Shilling was well acquainted with at least morphine and chloral hydrate. At this time, however, the police of Porte Alegre were satisfied that he owned a hypodermic syringe, which—

"Which he denied was his."

"It isn't illegal to own a syringe, but this one was confiscated, so there must have been other circumstances involved. I think he was an occasional user by this time, probably as a result of having entered into business arrangements with a drug ring. He had no money, so how did he support himself? He could have been very useful to such a ring. He was an educated American citizen, with no criminal record."

"BUT then he went to Uruguay and took a berth as messman on a freighter to get to Morroco," I said. "If he was in the employ of a drug ring, why not go comfortably?"

"And display sudden affluence? And what about the drugs I imagine he was carrying? It would be much easier to get them across as a seaman than as a traveler. Look at what else happened. He left the ship in Morocco, was arrested, but quickly got out of it. Then he went to Spain, then in the midst of the fascist revolution. Again he was arrested, but no charges were entered. Rather strange, was it not, unless he had influential friends? At any rate, he was not wanted and was deported to Portugal. Then he turned up in Denmark. He was traveling a good deal, you will notice, and making much swifter progress than one might expect from a drifter. Rather, he resembled a man of commerce—and the commerce, according to the Danish authorities, was concerned with morphine. Surprisingly, he again managed to go free. There is no record of the Consulate's intervention, and the Continental people believe his freedom was bought. Once again he was deported, and while making the short trip to Norway he had a 'nervous breakdown.' You know from our talks what this euphemism means."

"Yes, but the reasons? Wasn't he better off then?"

"Of course not, my dear man. His original troubles were still with him, and he had plenty of new ones. You

may be sure he had been very careful, but in spite of it he had been in the hands of police four times. He was constantly on the move. He was becoming addicted to the use of a deadly drug. Only a fool could not realize what a bitter end awaited him. It was too much for him and he 'broke down' under the new troubles. You may say that hospitalization of four months was a short period for a serious condition? Perhaps it was not serious, perhaps he had friends with influence enough to secure a doubtful discharge—he had already proved his value. From then on his assignments were less dangerous. In a few months he appeared in Trinidad, and came to official notice only because he had a bout with malaria. It was a mild attack, and he was out in ten days.

"This is very interesting. You see why?"

"The malaria? No, I don't understand."

"You would if you were a physician. Malaria and morphine are old traveling companions. Merchant sailors number a high proportion of addicts, and Shilling had sailed as a crew member at least twice. Many addicts share the same syringe, and an infected syringe has been known to carry the disease to scores. This is especially true of those addicts known as 'straight-line or mainline shooters'—the slang term for those who inject themselves intravenously. Malaria is almost endemic among such drug addicts. Shilling may have contracted it innocently, but his quick recovery would seem to indicate an acquired tolerance for the disease.

"But as soon as he left the hospital he went to Chile. It was a precipitate departure for a man just out of a sickbed, was it not? It seems to imply that Shilling's health was better served by an immediate voyage after spending a little time under observation of doctors: It is not very difficult to detect drug addicts. He went to Antofagasta and vanished. The rest is not difficult to follow?"

I NODDED. "Continental tells us they believe Shilling was connected with a drug ring that was broken up in that city shortly after he arrived. So Jim Shilling disappeared from Antofagasta, and two months later Raoul Besancon arrived in San Stefano, Peru. We know what he did there. He served the coastal drug traffic and sold morphine to wealthy addicts, probably recruited a few himself. But that was his business, and I don't see how it explains the other things he did."

"Naturally not. We are interested in Shilling's psychological development, so we must seek our information in the account of his personal life. Here we find two surprising facts. One, that he remained in San Stefano for eleven months, and left only when he had to. Two, he was using chloral. Do you see what these two things mean?"

"I don't think so. I'd say he stayed in San Stefano because he had an important job to do there. As for the chloral, I suppose it was a substitute for morphine. Maybe he had gotten too afraid of morphine."

Dr. Schumer shook his head. "I must disagree," he said, "and I will tell you why, but first I will tell you what these two things mean to me. I consider both of them as indications that Shilling was making a readjustment to life. He—"

"You mean he was recovering from what you described as his abnormal state of mind, his unhappiness and so on?"

"No, no, you must not allow me to confuse you. To adjust means to learn to accommodate a new condition. It

may mean compensation, not recovery. If one loses one's hearing and learns to read lips, one has adjusted, but hearing has not been recovered. When I say that Shilling was readjusting, I mean that he was learning to find happiness in a new way. He might have found happiness if he was able to write once again. He might also have found happiness in other ways which compensated for his original distress. Do you see what I mean?"

"I think so. You are saying that Shilling's long stay in San Stefano and his use of chloral are indications that he was finding happiness from things which compensated for his original troubles, but that I am not to construe this as meaning he was normal?"

"Exactly. First, then, we see that he remained in San Stefano until he was forced to leave. This is a striking change from his record of two years of wandering. No assigned task of business necessity could have kept him there unless he *wanted* to stay. Just as his wanderings was a symbol of unrest, his long stay there was a sign of adjustment.

"Second, his use of chloral. We have had indications that he used morphine, and morphine is a drug to which one may easily become addicted. You supposed he used chloral as a substitute, possibly because he had become too afraid of morphine. But chloral is not at all a possible substitute for morphine, especially where morphine itself is easily available. Chloral is a sedative, not a narcotic. Any morphine addict would find chloral wholly inadequate. As for his fears—there are addicts even among doctors, who know better than most people the dreadful end that awaits them, and yet are powerless to stop by themselves. The fact that Shilling used chloral—when he was in possession of an enormous quantity of morphine, and had already used it—shows us that he no longer *needed* morphine."

"Then why did he need chloral?" I asked. "You say that if he was a morphine addict, he couldn't change to chloral. But if he wasn't an addict, why did he need anything?"

THE Doctor smiled and shook his head. "These things are not matters of black and white. A leg is either broken or not. A habit is a process. I do not think Shilling was ever completely addicted to morphine; probably he used it when his distress seemed otherwise unbearable. But when life improved for him, he still retained a psychological habit. Now he could afford to let his fear of morphine affect him, but to satisfy the habit, he used chloral. Remember also that I am not saying he needed *nothing*. Rather, I am saying that a sedative was enough for him, a powerful sedative, to be sure."

I said: "That is to say that he was *fairly* well adjusted."

"Just so. The delicate factors of happiness were fairly well adjusted, but this sedative helped keep a good balance."

"And what were these factors?"

"There were several. A minor one, probably, was the fact that he was making money; financial success is always of some help. But much more important, he was now Raoul Besancon. The very act of playing this new man helped the old, inner Shilling. Mental illnesses sometimes take the form of dual personalities in a patient. I had a case once where a woman lived two distinct lives; in one she was a model of virtue, in the other she did things I blush to recall—but neither personality knew of the other's existence. I do not mean this is what happened to Shilling,

but there is generally great comfort in playing another person if the original person has not been happy. One may often be transported by an assumed role.

"As Besancon, the humble fisherman, he had social connections which were apparently based on his personality, his charm and magnetism, his erudition. Doubtless he was able to make many friends on that basis alone, friends who were ignorant of his wicked dealings. Though deep inside him he knew the truth, it was a tonic to have many people think other things. In this way Besancon might have felt, more often than not, that he was a success once more."

"What about the fact that he still wasn't writing?" I asked. "I can't feel that that sort of thing would be enough."

"Ah," smiled the Doctor. "You mean that none of these things touched the real basis of his despair? Quite so. He was a writer who could not write anymore. He had to find something else, to provide for that unhappy inner man, the writer who could not write. Now we reach what Mr. Jessup, in his report, called 'the other angle, the crazy one.' The Indians said Shilling had them worshipping an iron god. This god appears to have been a contrivance of lights and batteries. He was also involved with some young girls, in connection with this god.

"Here, for the first time, we run across the word *hypnotism*. Mr. Jessup writes: ' . . . he could practically hypnotize these Indians with it . . . later he brought in the girls.' At this point, you see, we have established conjunction with our hypothesis. We find at least three elements common to the Jessup report and Hammond's diary—the metal god or monster or Thing—hypnotism—and the unsavory business of the young girls, which parallels the case of Katherine Gray. There is a passage in the diary which throws some light on this metal god affair."

(We took out the diary and turned to the section where Hammond describes Shilling's visit on that last Saturday afternoon, and in which he tries to tell us what they spoke about. Here is that passage the Doctor meant: *". . . . and underneath was the veiled and unspoken thought that he was somehow abjectly bound to the Thing, that he had been bound from the beginning . . . and there was something else, something that linked his work to her influence. Something to explain more than anything had, why he had found such peace and strange exhilaration in the yards. Something utterly beyond comprehension. . . .")*

"IN THIS," resumed Dr. Schumer, "we have the connection between Shilling's metal god, or goddess, and his work! The passage is very valuable, but if it had not appeared in the diary, I would have assumed the connection myself. I would be forced to do it because there is no other suitable explanation. There had to be something which either took the blame for his failure to write, or somehow made it possible for him to write again—or even both. The metal goddess did this for him."

"But it was something he himself created!" I objected.

"It was nonetheless powerful for that. Primitive peoples all over the world worship gods of their own creation, objects they have fashioned from wood, stone, metal."

"Are you comparing Shilling's mind to that of a primitive?"

"You think it unfair? Perhaps I should point out that these practices are not confined to primitives alone. Also,

it is difficult often to differentiate between the beliefs of primitives and those we call civilized. I must disagree; I consider the comparison quite illuminating. The primitive creates a god because he has a specific, well-defined need for one. Shilling had a desperate need for something outside himself, some external force, to which he could transfer responsibility for his failure, or to which he could turn for help. Remember he had been living among people who were primitive enough, despite the Church's teachings, to create their own gods. Is it not conceivable he was influenced by them, however subconsciously?"

"I don't know," I said. "It's something I'd have said would be a startling thing to hear from a psychiatrist."

"No, no," said the Doctor, emphatically. "There is nothing here to startle a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist least of all. You seem to react well to examples; let me give you one. I had patient once who went around destroying thermometers. He was perfectly well except for this manifestation, or seemed to be. He had once been a very wealthy man and he lost his money. He had owned a huge cattle ranch, there had been a long, terrible heat wave that dried up the rivers and destroyed the grazing lands—in other words, the weather. He confided in me that his enemies had put devils in the thermometers to raise the mercury and thereby ruin him, so he smashed thermometers. Another example—"

"But that man was insane," I protested. "Mentally ill, I mean."

"Yes," the Doctor agreed, "and so was Shilling. I thought you understood that. Shilling's adjustment was possible because of this compensation. Men in Shilling's state of mind sometimes end up in asylums with persecution complexes. They may blame their troubles on some individual, some force, anything at all—a devil in the thermometer. Many cases of paranoia are characterized by a simple monamania. Paranoia is a slow, progressive disorder. We know that Shilling was mentally abnormal for several years. The step from neurasthenia, through a poorly-recovered 'nervous breakdown', to such a monomania is a small and not unlikely one. And it might very well go beyond that, later on."

"You obviously think it did go on," I said.

DR. SCHUMER smiled. "You mustn't make a god of me. I am only theorizing from a few facts. Yes, I do think it went further. For one, I think Shilling's use of chloral might have helped him there, at least in the beginning, because a relaxed person is more suggestible. Once he had his goddess, it possibly became necessary to convince others. Some manias may remain private and give satisfaction, others not. If you think you are Napoleon, for example, you will insist on being treated as an emperor. If you believe in a goddess, how much more satisfaction you will get if others also believe it!

"So Shilling began to convince the Indians. They were simple people and excellent material. I see you are getting ready to object. You think there is a contradiction here?"

"It seems to me," I said, "that his arrangement of batteries and lights was a conscious trick to impress the Indians. How could he reconcile the real existence of his goddess with the fact that he had to trick simple Indians into believing it?"

"I had a patient who believed she was haunted by her dead sister because she had married her sister's husband. She told me her sister came into her

room every night and moaned. I expressed my doubts, so one night my patient began to moan until an attendant came. She insisted we had heard her sister, and thereafter she moaned every night in an effort to convince me. This did not weaken her belief in the ghost. She justified her action to herself by believing that her sister's ghost was particularly unaccommodating. She *knew* it was there, so she took the liberty of transmitting the moans so we could hear them too."

"And Shilling did the same thing?" I said. "He *knew* there was a real goddess, but he had to use a trick to prove it. He knew it was a trick, but he felt justified because he knew there was also a goddess."

"Exactly so. Perhaps he even gave the Indians a little chloral to help them; chloral is soluble in water and can be drunk, and it is an excellent hypnotic. And then he had his lights and possibly a ritual, and after awhile he had gotten to be quite expert at inducing hypnosis. This question of hypnosis may bother you unless you have had experience with it in some way. Have you had such experience?"

"Some," I said. "When I took psych in college we had a professor who could hypnotize half the class in less than a minute. He'd pick his half, too. He'd extend an arm and say that he was going to hypnotize the first five rows to the left of his arm. And I've seen the same thing done as entertainment in theatres and at parties."

"Good," Dr. Schumer nodded. "Then you know how quickly it can be done. It is basically a matter of suggestibility. One does not have to agree to be hypnotized for it to be done. It can be fought successfully if one knows it is being attempted, but if nothing is said it can easily be done. One will not even remember it later if a post-hypnotic suggestion to that effect is given."

"You mean the whole thing is forgotten?"

"Yes. For instance, there has been some notable success in the breaking of certain habits. A man comes to a psychiatrist and wants to be broken of his habit of smoking. He is hypnotized and a post-hypnotic suggestion is given to him that he will not smoke for the next twenty-four hours, and that he will forget that he was hypnotized. When he is brought out, he is told to return the next day. The suggestions then slowly increase his periods of abstinence to forty-eight hours, to four days, a week, and so on, depending on the strength of the habit."

"And this is what you think Shilling was able to do?"

"I think he became expert at it. He was able to hypnotize those Indians with increasing ease. When he was sure of himself, he began to branch out. He chose several young girls as subjects and brought them into the rituals. He chose them because they were probably highly suggestible, but I think there was also another reason, which I will come to in a moment. Here, unless you have any questions, I think we can leave Shilling's development."

I SUMMED it up: "He was caught while carrying on his rituals and brought back to San Stefano. There were people there who were afraid of what he might reveal if he was forced to talk, so they hustled him out of the country. He made his way to Haiti and then came home to New York, mad as a hatter."

"Yes, quite mad, though I'm not too sure of that. I think he was really happy then. He got himself a job in a dumping-grounds for metal, where he could conceal his goddess, or where he could believe she had taken up new resi-

dence. His equilibrium was restored. We have found no evidence that he used chloral and I don't think he did. He needed only his mania, and maybe that was only a work habit by then. There are well known instances of great writers who could not work unless they put on a black robe. Balzac, or was it Flaubert, had to smell the odor of decaying apples which he kept in a desk drawer where he worked. So the goddess permitted him to work again, and he had almost completed a novel by the time Hammond accidentally found him. Until then he had made no attempt to seek out his old friends.

"Indeed, it is quite possible that Shilling had really 'refilled the dry well' in his travels and adventures. His first book was auto-biographical, and many an author has written such a book and found he has exhausted his store of material. Now Shilling had enough for half a dozen books. He might have written and published this new book and been quite a normal man after that, if the book was well received by the public."

"From what I heard," I said, "it was excellent. I felt he had really matured in those three years."

Dr. Schumer shrugged. "We will never know now what the truth really was. Perhaps it was a chance remark of Hammond's that set him off again. The yards affected him oddly. They didn't impress you in any way, but they did strike others. If you will glance at the early pages of the diary, you will see how it might have happened. Hammond said the yards seemed to have an unearthly beauty and strength. How easily this might have struck a responsive chord in Shilling. Hammond writes that Shilling laughed, then grew somber and dreamy. Right then the seed was planted.

"In other words, what Shilling had done to the Indians and the girls, he now did to Hammond?"

"YES, maybe tentatively at first. It must have been a great temptation not to try. Shilling could hypnotize him in a moment, and then he could suggest anything. He proceeded slowly. When Hammond came to visit him, he let him ponder the ants and the ghost crabs. He had a different kind of mentality in Hammond and he dealt differently with it. His first real move was to suggest to Hammond that the sound of the wind he would hear running through the mountains of metal was something to listen to, that it was like a choking, crying voice.

"And then Shilling met Jean Lowell. He went for a walk with her that afternoon. He had a terrible weakness for girls, and perhaps he exercised his power over her. She had listened to him reading with an attention so rapt that Hammond remarked about it, so she was already quite suggestible. Shilling knew that she was supposedly Hammond's girl, and he might have taken steps to ward off Hammond's influence. She asked Hammond to go for a walk, but she listened quietly and seemed distant. And then, strangely, she became lost and would not answer him when he called to her. Might this not have been a suggestion of Shilling's—that she leave Hammond and return alone? And because it was so dark she couldn't find her way back, and waited to be found. As for Hammond, by then all he needed was the sound of the wind and he was off in reveries.

"It went on from there. Hammond kept thinking about the mud and the ghost crabs everywhere he went. Shilling just couldn't resist going further. One night he took Hammond to the yards. The diary tells us he gripped Hammond's arm and told him to listen.

Until then all Hammond heard was his own breathing, but now he heard the *'wonderful'* sound, as Shilling called it. Hammond agreed. Before this it had been a mournful sound, but if Shilling called it wonderful, it was wonderful. That same night Shilling told Hammond about the Thing. Their conversation is very revealing, viewed in retrospect. I'll show you a sample or two that will show you.

"At one point, Hammond writes, Shilling 'smiled a slow, humorous smile' and said: *'I think there is a different kind of communication—a way of having a thought put in one's mind.'* Hammond thought it was a reference to the Thing, but it was another reference that exacted the smile from Shilling. Of the Thing, Shilling said: *'It wasn't an intelligence open to usual cognition, but it was there.'* Yes, of course, exactly as my patient knew a ghost was was there. Or: *'It wasn't always there, but from time to time it made itself felt. And then, after awhile it was no longer in my mind alone.'* There are more, if you want to look.

"Then Shilling gave Hammond a real jolt—he let him *hear* the Thing speak. We have no doubt who did the speaking, but Hammond has a helpful passage here too; he writes that after the voice was gone, *he opened his eyes* and saw Shilling beside him. After that he probably was allowed to keep his eyes open, because he didn't know what he saw anyway. But what did the Thing have to say? It quoted poetry, exactly the sort of poetry one would expect from Shilling's literary background. But by this time there was no limit to what Shilling could do. There is very little limit to the progressive influence an expert can have with an habitually hypnotized subject, but then, as you recall, Shilling did have some minor difficulty with Hammond about the Thing."

"WHEN Hammond came to see me?" I asked. "He told me that he was afraid to talk about it, and didn't understand why he was able to at all."

"That was part of it. Just before that, he had had a talk with Shilling in which he confessed his fear of the Thing and insisted it was too great a secret for them alone to keep. Hammond wrote a very curious remark here: *'From the beginning, I think, I felt its mind was unhealthy.'* Curious indeed, considering what we know about Shilling! Hammond seemed to be getting out of hand, so one night Shilling let him actually *see* the Thing. What did Hammond see? A small filament, with current passing through it. It was suspended in air, but that was a simple matter to arrange—an overhanging loop of wire with two inches of insulation cut away. It was all simple, once Hammond was hypnotized.

"The poor fellow couldn't get it out of his mind. He found this girl, Maria Denisov, waiting for him in his apartment the night he left you, and her love for him transfigured her. He was half deranged, and here was this fine girl offering him comfort and love. I do not say he was not in love with her, but we must remember his state of mind at the time. He ran off with her and they were married, but it was no use. He couldn't forget that he knew a terrible secret. He—"

I interrupted. "Dr. Schumer, he wasn't actually hypnotized all this time, was he? Didn't he have lucid moments in which he might have realized what was going on?"

"Lucid? No. Comparatively lucid? Perhaps. He was not under hypnosis constantly, but there were post-hypnotic suggestions that carried him between the times he saw Shilling—just as a smoking addict is carried between sessions with the psychiatrist. He had

been told to believe and he had to believe. The best he could do was struggle. He went along normally for a day or two and then he saw an ant. Instantly the post-hypnotic suggestion was activated. The whole chain of associations came to life. He ran out to sit near the mud and thought about the things Shilling had put into his mind."

"But Hammond's actions don't seem normal to me," I said. "I keep thinking that it could never have happened to me, or to a lot of people I know. Am I so very wrong, or was Hammond exceptionally predisposed toward being subjected so easily?"

"Again," said Dr. Schumer, "you want a black and white answer. I don't know if it could have happened to you. Partly it would depend on you, but there might be all sorts of other factors. The time might be important, the way you happened to feel, and so on. I would say that Hammond was very well disposed toward subjection by hypnosis, but the yards also affected him. So did his trust and admiration for Shilling. And it was a progressive thing, you see. Take this girl, Katherine Gray, for example. I believe Shilling chose her quite carefully, and one of the reasons for his choice was that she was highly suggestible. She was a poetess, and probably admired Shilling greatly. And she was shy and retiring, rather like Hammond, a quiet person. You see?"

"I MEANT to ask you about Kathy Gray," I said. "The diary has Hammond coming to the yards that night without Shilling knowing it. He was exhausted, then he heard a scream. He went to the ridge and saw Shilling holding Kathy. She was crying as he kissed her. Then she ran away from him as Hammond heard the Thing recite those lines about death arriving. Hammond saw the flame kill her. She vanished, and later he saw her lying dead in the swamp. Hammond lay down on the beach and left hours later. But—at no time that night did he speak to Shilling or get close enough to let Shilling see him, *so he could not have been hypnotized that night.* If that is so, how can you account for his story of what he saw?"

Dr. Schumer asked: "Do you believe he *actually saw* the things he says he saw?"

"No, but he wasn't hypnotized that night, so where did he get the whole idea?"

"We are going to have this difficulty again," said the Doctor, "so I might as well attack this problem now. Don't you realize that if Shilling could tell Hammond what to see—*that he could also tell him what he had seen?* If, at some later time, Shilling told Hammond that he had seen the Thing kill Katherine Gray that night, Hammond would then believe it."

"I'm not sure I understand."

"Suppose you had been to the movies last night," the Doctor said, "and you saw a picture about the army. Tonight you came to me and I put you under hypnosis and told you that you had seen a wild west picture last night. Tomorrow night, if I asked you what was the picture you saw—you would tell me it was about the west."

"I see. You mean that the whole story of Kathy and the Thing was something Shilling later made Hammond believe?"

"Correct," the Doctor nodded. "It was not even necessary that Hammond should have been in the yards that night, for him later to believe that he had been there and had seen this affair. As it is, we know he *was* there."

"Then what do you think happened

that night? If you think anything!"

"THE possibilities are almost infinite," the Doctor frowned. "Shilling put the pieces together in the pattern he wanted, but the same pieces could make many, many patterns. I have my own, naturally."

"Then begin with Kathy Gray," I suggested. "How does she fit?"

"You recall that Hammond wrote he couldn't understand what there was between Katherine and Shilling? He wrote that she reminded him of Helen Drew. Shilling was once engaged to Helen but she left him and married another. I think Katherine reminded Shilling too of Helen. I believe Helen's desertion was a serious blow to Shilling, especially because it came during his worst days, and he never got over it. When he decided to enlarge the group that worshipped his goddess, he chose girls, we know. Part of the reason was their individual suggestibility—but I think if we could pursue the matter, we would find that most of these girls were of Helen's Drew's type. By getting them to worship his goddess, he was also subjecting them to him—and he was getting back at Helen.

"When Shilling met Katherine, Hammond was already under his power, so to speak. She reminded him of Helen, and his success with Hammond made him think of including her. He began to see her surreptitiously. Hammond's lawyer hired a detective to look into their relationship, and the detective, you recall, believed they were carrying on an affair. It is not important, except that it tells us Shilling saw the girl with some frequency.

"She was there the night Hammond came. Something was going on and Hammond saw it. I don't know what it was, but it was enough to frighten Hammond out of his wits. Maybe there were strange rites—we had that suggestion from the Continental report. Maybe what happened was so repugnant or terrible that Shilling's hold on the girl was just about broken. You recall Hammond wrote that Shilling's relationship with the Thing was 'diseased.' I don't know what that could mean, but it sounds horrible enough. Whatever it was, Hammond saw it, and he saw it *when he was not hypnotized.*

"You can imagine what that did to him. For weeks he had been believing in the Thing. It had made life unbearable. Now he saw something that was obviously hypnosis. He couldn't just thrust everything out of his mind at once. It didn't immediately become clear. He saw enough to shake him to his roots, but he didn't know what to believe and what to understand. He understood enough to realize that something was terribly wrong—enough also to realize that Katherine's life was in great danger, if not already forfeit.

"UNNOTICED, he crept back to the beach and lay there, trying to work it out in his mind. His world was in chaos, he could not think. He knew only that he had to warn Jean Lowell, because she was closest to Shilling and in the greatest danger. Finally he left the yards. He had been soaked by the tide and he looked like a maniac. He went to Jean's house and tried to warn her, but Shilling had long before put Jean beyond Hammond's reach. Wasn't her refusal to speak to Hammond a strange thing? She had been very close to him for many years; no matter what she might think, how could she let him beg and weep outside her door and not speak to him? It was not a normal reaction.

"So Hammond went home. There he found Maria's sister and was forced to

listen to an undeserved denunciation. When the sister threatened to take Maria away, he couldn't stand it any longer and he almost threw her out. When she had left, finally, all he could do was to stand there and scream. It was hours before he recovered sufficiently to tell his wife what was happening and what he had seen. It couldn't have made much sense. He still didn't know what to believe, what was real and what was Shilling's work. In the morning, Maria called her doctor. She didn't know what to think, and she checked herself when she was on the verge of confiding in the doctor. Besides, Hammond was shouting again.

"If you will examine Dr. Pryce's testimony, you will see that Hammond did not really threaten his wife. He shouted that her life was not safe with him, that she should leave before it was too late, and he would face it alone. Far from a threat, this was an offer of protection. Hammond had seen something that made him realize that he was in danger, and he feared that Maria might be hurt because of him. Finally he was given a sedative and he slept. While he was asleep, Shilling telephoned.

"What had happened to Shilling, meanwhile? He had had Katherine on his hands. Something had gone wrong, his hold was breaking. He had gone too far and he was afraid of what she might do. He was terrified by the thought of Katherine going to the police with a story that might end in connecting him to Raoul Besancon. By five o'clock that morning he knew he had to do away with her. But he let her leave—so she could be seen leaving, to establish his alibi if she were traced to him. Then he went out through some secret exit and headed her off before she got to the trolley. Either by violence or persuasion, he got her back into the yards. He could have strangled her right there in that deserted street and carried her back. Then he hid her body until he could dispose of it within the next few days.

"BUT the next morning the chief watchman, Mulvaney, told him of Hammond's visit the night before. In his bewilderment he at first denied it, but a moment's reflection made him change his story. He said Hammond had left at midnight with Katherine. That story was no good either, because of the watchman who had seen the girl leave hours after Hammond had left, but it gave him time to think, to look for a way out, in case he suddenly needed an alibi.

"Of course, it occurred to him that if he got rid of the watchman, he could let the guilt gravitate to Hammond, but this plan was far fetched and dangerous, and quite worthless for another reason. For he knew what Hammond might have seen the previous night; if Shilling had feared the girl's talking, he feared Hammond even more. There was no immediate danger—nothing had happened yet—but he had to act quickly. He knew he had to get rid of Hammond. Was there perhaps a way of doing it that incriminated Hammond so overwhelmingly that nothing Hammond could say would help him? He had had a great power over Hammond—was there some way he could use that power now?

"He was forming a plan. Very likely Jean had called him that morning and told him of Hammond's actions, the night before. The first thing he had to do was check on Hammond. He telephoned, and to his surprise, Maria answered. Their conversation should not be too difficult to imagine. Shilling learned he was speaking to Hammond's wife, and she learned she was speak-

ing to the man her husband had told her about. They both made cautious inquiries, but Shilling had the advantage of knowing what it was all about. When he learned that Hammond was ill and in bed, he knew where he stood. He told Maria he had seen Hammond the night before, that Hammond had been acting strangely when he left with Katherine—so strangely that Shilling called to inquire about him. The response was excellent. To Maria he was a normal man, an old friend of Hammond, contradicting the little she had understood of her husband's incoherent story. Shilling advised that Hammond rest, and with a slight note of urgency, promised to come to see him the next day.

"The call increased Maria's fears, so she called her doctor and told him he need not return. In the evening she telephoned her sister to reassure her. For the rest, she kept trying to make Hammond change his story. When she told him what Shilling had said, Hammond didn't know what to think. He saw something was afoot, but he couldn't begin to understand it. He waited for Shilling to come, determined to find out what Shilling was up to.

"But he was useless against Shilling. As he wrote, he looked in Shilling's eyes and knew he was lost. Shilling fooled him completely, caught him off guard. He pleaded for Hammond's help before he said anything else. He presented himself as a victim, and quickly showed Hammond that they were together in the tragedy and in what might happen. *'There was no denying him,'* Hammond wrote. *'There was no sense fighting him if we were together in this.'* After that, he was slowly hypnotized.

"SHILLING'S plan was dangerous and elaborate, and he had to work with great caution and skill. He made Hammond tell him everything—the fact that he had told Maria the story, the fact that he had been to see you. Instead of trying to dominate Hammond, to force him to do what Shilling wanted, Shilling worked on a different method. He worked out the story of the cycles, of his loss of will. *He persuaded Hammond as to what Hammond had seen.* He made him forget some things and got him to 'remember' others. The whole story was pointed toward making both of them, and potentially, many others, the victims of the Thing, and the plan was to destroy the Thing. That object of the plan—the destruction of the Thing—was something Hammond wanted so badly that he was a magnificent subject. He had weeks of domination behind him, he was all confused and his nerves were shattered. He believed everything—that Shilling could have let him be blamed for the girl's murder—that he had actually witnessed an entirely different scene that night in the yards—that the plan was the only way out.

"There was another part to this plan of which we know nothing but the result—the fact that Hammond strangled his wife, but I will try to explain that when we come to it in a moment.

"Meanwhile, what of those aspects of the plan which we do know? When Shilling left Hammond, he met Maria in the street and they talked. Maybe he told her then that Katherine was dead, maybe he waited until the next day, but she promised to come to the yards the following afternoon, where he had something to show her. She might have become suspicious of him; her remarks to her sister can be interpreted in various ways. At any rate, she called her sister that night and told her she'd be at the party the next day.

"She came to the yards that Sunday afternoon and spoke to Shilling several times. He told her where she would find the body, and toward evening she went to the remote part of the yards where it had been hidden and she saw it. Shilling followed her. He told her that Hammond had committed the murder, that he was unbalanced. Maybe Shilling offered to help her—it does not matter, because he knew that when she went home, that would be the end of her—"

"That's the part I don't understand," I said.

Dr. Schumer sighed. "All in good time. I promise you nothing, but I will try to show you what might have happened. I told you when I began that it was foolish to hope to understand everything in this."

I MADE a resigned noise and the Doctor continued:

"Shilling knew, I repeat, that Maria would soon be out of his way. It did not matter to him what she thought or believed. The party would continue, the dynamite was close at hand, ready to be connected. It began to rain and everyone went home. That did not alter matters, because Hammond had been given a prearranged time when everyone would have been gone anyway. Shilling kept Jean there because she was part of his plan to involve Hammond.

"Look how it would have appeared if the plan had worked according to schedule. At the pre-arranged time, Shilling would take Jean out of the houseboat because he would have heard some sound, some voice—the signal, of course, but he could later say that was what made him go out of the houseboat. The dynamite had been so planted that it would blow up the houseboat, *but the dynamite under the body was purposely left unconnected.* Hammond would depress the plunger, there would be an explosion, the police would come. What would they discover?

"They would find no fingerprints except Hammond's. They would soon find Maria in Hammond's home, murdered by strangulation. They would find Katherine's body, and see that she too had been strangled to death. They would hear Shilling's account of the night when Katherine was killed—how Hammond had come there, behaved strangely, and had left with Katherine. Everything could be explained, and the story was clear. *The story was almost exactly what the District Attorney later decided*—that Hammond, insane with jealousy, had married Maria; that he had killed Katherine to have the blame put on Shilling; that Shilling had found it out and told Maria; that Hammond had then killed his wife, come to the yards and tried to murder both Shilling and Jean. The use of the dynamite was itself so violent a conception that it would point to one explanation—that Hammond was a dangerous maniac.

"AFTER that, what could Hammond do to save himself? Who would listen to him? What if a watchman swore he had seen Katherine alive at a time when Hammond was elsewhere—what would that matter beside the evidence of another strangulation? If Hammond said anything about the Thing, the metal goddess, it would be further evidence of his unbalanced mind—something to which you too could testify—or else he would be considered a faker, as he actually was considered during the trial.

"Do you see how it all fits? Do you agree with my logic?"

I said: "Yes, but what about Maria? And what about the box? I know there's

a connection somewhere, but what is it? Maria's sister testified that Shilling ran after Maria and gave her that box when she went home, and that he had said he wished she hadn't gone home alone. Later he could bring that up as evidence that he was afraid for her, that he warned her—while to us it is certainly evidence that he expected her to be killed. I see also that he could claim there was originally some of Hammond's belongings in the box, and he could not account for the mud later found in it—"

"No," said the Doctor, "he did not expect the box to be found. The way Hammond took it along and then hid it in the curio shop makes me think he had full instructions about the box—"

"But what about his killing Maria?"

"I don't know," the Doctor shrugged. "There is little to go on here, but this is what I think: that Hammond killed her as the result of a post-hypnotic instruction from Shilling. Shilling told him that, and more, the last afternoon he saw him. The box with its mud and ghost crabs was the releasing factor—the instruction was to take effect when Hammond saw it. That's why Shilling made sure Maria took it."

"Do you really think Hammond could strangle his own wife because of a sugtion given to him while he was under hypnosis? I've always read that no one can be made to do anything he wouldn't ordinarily do."

"Then perhaps Hammond did not love his wife as much as we seem to believe," said the Doctor. "I agree with you that it would be a rare instance if we knew that hypnotism alone compelled him to kill her if he did not want to, or was not at least partially amenable to the idea. Or she may have shown him the box and said something to him that drove him into a frenzy—a contingency forseen by Shilling—and this released the suggestion."

"Then you really think Hammond strangled his wife?"

"MY dear fellow," said the Doctor, patiently, "we *know* he really strangled his wife. We may not know why, we may not know what made him do it, *but we do know he did it.* There is no other explanation. There was no one else there; no one else could have done it. Your only alternative is to believe Hammond's account of how Maria died. Can you believe that, and not what I am saying?"

I had to say no, but I had more questions. "What about the rest of what Hammond wrote, then? He described the way she came in, what she told him, and so on. He didn't see Shilling after that happened, so how did he come by that account? Was that also something Shilling had told him beforehand—I mean, did he tell him what to do and then what to believe had happened?"

The Doctor looked puzzled, so I put it a different way. "You say Shilling told Hammond that he was to strangle Maria when the box was opened. All right, Hammond did it. But did Shilling also tell him what he was to believe had happened after he did it? That's pretty steep."

"I don't know," the Doctor said. "Maybe Hammond made it up later on, when he thought he remembered. I'll show you what I mean. Look at the diary and see what Hammond wrote. Here he says: '. . . *somehow within me was the prescience of tragic doom* . . .' You can accept that for what it appears to be—a foreboding—or you wonder whether Hammond meant that he knew he was going to kill her. Then he asks himself: '. . . *how am I to tell myself these memories are false, that I have created them?*' Is he referring only to the fact that I told him all his memories

were false, or did he himself wonder? He also wrote: *'The catalyst of doubt still operates.'* Best of all, he wrote: *'And finally, to confess that most of that hour is as vague as it has always been'*—so he admits he really can't remember.

"He says he dimly remembers her terror, supposedly because of what she knew, but it might have been because he began to strangle her. He thinks he remembers the box pressing against him as he leaned forward—which might have happened as he strangled her. He says: *'I do not trust these imperfect images which my brain has crusted with horror.'* He also admits *he has never remembered what was in the box*—so here we have an excellent example of motivated amnesia—the memories are crusted with horror. But the 'small blue marks that ringed her throat' tell us what happened.

"AFTER he strangled her, however, something happened to him. He saw her lying dead, and part of his consciousness came alive. He dimly realized that Shilling was to blame for all this. He was almost in a state of shock, but he was still acting under some compulsion. He went to the yards, possibly didn't know or didn't care that Jean was with Shilling, and blew up the houseboat, believing also that he had destroyed the body of Katherine Gray. He still had the box with him, and dazed and hurt as he was, he remembered to take it along and get rid of it somewhere."

"And then?" I asked.

"And then, returning home, he sat beside his wife's body, and the full realization of her death, of his part in it, was too much for him. Everything welled up within him, and his mind retreated—he was the soldier on the battlefield caught in a searchlight. The light was too dazzling, too bewildering, and the shock was on him completely. He was safe from everything and everyone at last.

"He stayed that way for a long time, but gradually, as you know, after he came here, he began to recover. He lost his fear of mud, he stopped acting out the listening to the Thing. He began to wonder who I was, where he was. Then he began to remember things, but they were such horrible things that he needed some justification for them—he needed something which would let him feel sorry for himself.

"Gradually he built up the notion that he was under sentence of death, that the Thing had passed that sentence. He built up the defense for what he had done to his wife. He had Shilling's tale of suspended death in Katherine's case, so he made a parallel case for Maria. Then he must have included himself among them—believing that the same box that had killed his wife could kill him. That was one thing he never told me, the part the box played, because it was his defense—it made him a victim among victims. He was such a victim, of course, but he remembered that he had killed his wife.

"FINALLY, he began to forget again, because there was too much tragedy to bear in what he remembered. He might have forgotten it all if I had not been encouraging him to consider all his memories as delusions. I had enough influence with him to get him to believe that it might be so, yet he was forgetting, and it worried him. He decided to write a diary and I encouraged the idea.

"In his mind the diary was to be the vessel into which he would pour all his delusions, half memories, real memories. It was as if he sought to imprison what he feared in the past on

paper. Once he had it on paper, he might have destroyed the whole thing, as if that would destroy the past and what he feared and remembered in it. I understood that, and kept copying the diary as he wrote it. But there was always the box to plague him. How could he be sure of anything unless he could see that box, or find out there was no box? So he told me what he remembered of it and asked me to try to get it.

"Meanwhile he wrote the diary. Some things were very clear. He was always clear reporting early conversations, for instance. When he wrote of those that had occurred when he was under hypnosis, he was less clear and often confused. As he wrote, he brought that whole period back and he had lapses, because he really wanted to forget. But he kept struggling, because deep inside him he felt there was no box and there would be no box. If that was so, then he was really writing delusions, and that gave him strength to go on.

"He wrote that he could not record these things if he really believed them, but his doubts multiplied as he drew closer to the end, to the part where he would have to write of Maria's death. When he wrote of Shilling's visit to his home, he subconsciously revived the suspicion and distrust he had felt at that time and it colored his writing. When he wrote of what happened in the yards the night Katherine was killed, he told the story Shilling had told him. That story, you saw, was that Shilling opposed the Thing's killing, and it had more of those quotations of which Hammond was ignorant. The very fact that he remembered them so accurately—and didn't even know they were quotations when he came to you shows how indelibly impressed they were by hypnotic suggestion.

"THE parable of the murderer and the sleeper I have explained as something akin to the product of a trance. Here again his suspicions of Shilling were evident. But it was at the very end, where he had to explain Maria's death, that he resorted to real delusion, because he could not face the truth. He even wrote that he was not sure the Thing had been destroyed, because how could it have passed a sentence on him if he had destroyed it?

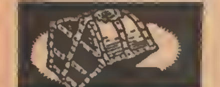
"Yet he had pinned all his hopes on that box coming to nothing, that it would be meaningless when he saw it again, if it really existed. He offered to 'surrender' to me, to believe everything was a delusion, in that expectation. When he came downstairs and saw what was in it, his worst fears were realized. He was at a high pitch of excitement—he was ready to take his first step of real freedom, no matter what he would have to accept. But he did not expect that it would revive everything he had fought for two years. This time the shock was too much for him. It killed him. A blood vessel in his brain burst and he was free at last. . . ."



(COMMENT BY THE AUTHOR)

I had my notes. They ended the story of the metal monster, as far as I knew, but I wasn't sure of anything by then. I'm still not sure and I don't think I ever will be.—D.V.R.

THE END






WHEN DRUNKENNESS WAS A CRIME

By ROBERT LAWRENCE

THE pages of history reveal many an interesting story, and yet there is much that we never read about. In the early days of our own country, for instance, we can find astounding true tales, evidences of which are found in the law records of the times. They tell us of the day-to-day existence of living, breathing, individuals; we are able to get some insight into their problems of maintaining order, their crime waves. For in the days of the New Amsterdam Dutch (1647 —) they had a crime wave. It gained such a shocking extent that the new governor threw his arms up in alarm, and yet he was almost powerless. Every one of his constituents, the entire community, was on the side of the criminals.

The problem can be bluntly stated here and now. It was drunkenness! Peter Stuyvesant, the famous Dutch governor with the wooden leg, was no prude himself. He had a dangerous pair of fists and a hot temper. He was a beer-guzzler besides. When he arrived on the shores of this new land and surveyed the colony he was to govern, even he was shocked at the drunkenness he found. The amount of liquor being consumed in that community of only seven hundred souls was beyond belief. There were only about one hundred and fifty houses in the entire village, and at least forty of these buildings sold wine and ale. With the only plausible excuse they could muster up, these thirsty citizens told their new governor that they considered the drinking water in their new land unsafe.

From the outward appearance of the town and its activities one would hardly assume them to be a community of drunkards. The homes were quaint, spotlessly clean, topped by thatched roofs and wooden chimneys. There were two or three roughly cobbled streets dotted with pillories for punishment of petty thieves. Everywhere the stocky Dutch burghers strolled about puffing on their slender clay pipes. You could see them seated calmly here and there, sitting over their beer.

As peaceful as this may all have seemed at first, it turned out to be only skin deep. Far too many of the townspeople fell into the canal that ran near Whitehall Street, mute evidence that they had been so stewed they couldn't find their way. A juvenile delinquency problem was also well under way since liquor was obtainable to young and old alike.

What constituted an extreme, a slaphappy extreme, in misbehavior was the early Dutch practice of really "letting go" around holiday time. For three weeks after Christmas the drinking and merry-making in the colony continued. The lone representative of law and order in the town, the "shout," was a sort of combination sheriff and district attorney. This poor overworked creature was supposed to scout around outside the barricade and watch for Indians. With all the whooping and fireworks going on inside, it would have been impossible for him to hear an Indian tribe riding up, let alone yell loud enough to warn the population within. His work was made still more difficult by the pranks of small boys in the town. They greatly enjoyed hiding in the shadows, then yelling "Indians!" at the tops of their young lungs.

The Governor had to do something about this sorry situation. It was his duty to remedy the problem, and mustering all the impressive words he could he drew up an official message which listed a very lengthy group of prohibition laws, amendments and interdictions. Included there could be found a nine o'clock curfew bell.

It would seem that now the liquor flow through the colony would be stopped, the men would once more be able to walk a straight line and not face the danger of drowning while in a drunken stupor. But what actually was the result when these new restrictions were placed upon the people?

Liquor was no longer sold legally in the town. With a high tax it was sold in the area surrounding the town. The taxes rose higher and higher; the blind pigs became more numerous all the time; the beer became thinner and thinner. The beer became so terrible that often disputes over it reached the courts. Customers would refuse to pay for their liquor stating how distasteful it had been. Thereupon the innkeeper would take him to court and demand his money under the law.

A typical trial over the quality of beer often ran something like this. The defendent said that the beer was bad, completely distasteful, and furthermore he wouldn't allow even his worst enemy's dog to drink the stuff without having it on his conscience. The plaintiff denied this, insisted that the defendent was only interested in *not* paying the bill, and as an argument added that people wouldn't buy his beer if it wasn't good. The defendent with an unusual gleam in his anger-filled eyes suggested that there was only one way for the judge and jury to find out the truthful quality of the beer in question. He suggested that the entire company go to the tavern. Conscientious in their desire the entire group half walked, half ran to put the liquor through the real test. They had a grand time drinking up the last remains of exhibit A.

During Stuyvesant's governorship the town expanded. After eighteen years of hard labor directed toward making it a peaceful sober community, Stuyvesant's successor found 1400 worthy citizens living there. They were all steady, conscientious drinkers.



ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES DEVEREUX

BY KEITH EDGAR

Being a key worker in a war plant has its disadvantages. When sabotage happens, it can make you look pretty guilty

RUTH BARTON hurried through the thick earthen blast-wall into the change house of the explosive plant. She punched the clock with seconds to spare and ran to her locker.

Strip to brassiere and panties and cotton socks. Rush to the barrier to be inspected by two efficient matrons for bobby pins in her curly black hair or other contraband. Pass the barrier and clothe her sturdy figure in white slacks and tunic top, its red buttons indicating that she handled high-explosive. Pull on hand-sewn, nailless shoes and pop the white cap on her head. Walk—no running allowed—down the long corridor with the shops staggered off it for blast protection, to the fuse-loading room. Slip into her place at the assembly bench and draw a deep breath.

The other eighty girls and half dozen men were in their places, chatting. Ruth's brown eyes flashed a greeting at Bruce, over on the tightening machine.

The lights flickered and the graveyard shift swung into action.

Facing Ruth was an open-end box with a thick glass front. She picked up a fuse from the tray with her left hand and slid it into the box. Her right hand selected one of the vital detonator pellets, flashed into the other end of the box, and, watching sharply through the glass, her expert fingers placed the pellet in its cavity. She then slid the loaded fuse along the bench to blonde Margot who screwed on the brass cap and passed the deadly instrument to the tightening machine.

Bruce shoved the fuse down into the machine, gave the tightening handle a twirl, removed the fuse and gently placed it in a tray to be carried off to the packing room.

By the time Ruth had checked off two trays on her scratch pad the shift was running smoothly, and some of the girls began to sing. The boys on the



A hand pushed her down mercilessly—she was going to die!

tightening machines started to harmonize *Melancholy Baby* with the girls joining in on the chorus.

"Oh, gosh," muttered Ruth under her breath, "if I had a decent singing voice I wouldn't have to sit here and get my hands stained yellow from 'tetryl.' Why haven't I got glamor?"

She watched her nimble fingers under the glass. Clever fingers, doing a vital job to smash the Axis, but stained brown-yellow as if they were bathed in nicotine.

Ruth wasn't ashamed of them, exactly, but when that nice army captain had danced with her, she had felt a bit embarrassed about placing her discolored hand in his tanned fingers.

The girls were crooning *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes,* and she shivered deliciously, recalling the thrill of having Captain Bob Hammond, tall, rangy, and sort of ugly, sit down at her table in the crowded restaurant and diffidently inquire, "I say, do you mind if I share your table?"

Of course she hadn't minded, and when he had shyly asked her to go dancing out on the lake for the scant two hours remaining before she had to get to work, Ruth had incredulously accepted.

"Nonsense," she told herself firmly, "You don't fall in love just like that with a man who deliberately scrapes an acquaintance in a restaurant and then dances a few times with you." But, suppose he had a soft, sympathetic voice, and nice blue eyes; and suppose over a couple of cokes he had told her bluntly that he thought she was a charming girl and wanted to see more of her? Well, Miss Barton?

She shivered again, wondering at the impulse which had made her, at the gates of the plant, suddenly plant a kiss on his cheek before jumping out of his car.

THE lights flickered twice, and Ruth looked up in surprise. Now, what? Work stopped and the hands all gathered at the end of the shop.

Government inspectors, in their white uniforms and gray buttons, gave crisp orders.

"Girls into this room, please. Men will go down the corridor."

They were quickly marched into a vacant room and efficiently searched by matrons. No word of explanation was given. When the search was over, the girls were returned to their places, the men rejoined them, and the shift swung back into action.

But there was no more singing now. The exuberance had gone out of the shop. Ugly rumors drifted around. Why the search? Sabotage? Contraband? Theft? Or had some official merely wanted to give them a scare? A couple of weeks ago a man had been found with a single match in his possession. He had been instantly dismissed and heavily fined. Vital dangerous work necessitated constant vigilance.

Nimble fingers, deftly handling delicate instruments and deadly tetryl, making food for the hungry guns. This one will shoot down a bomber, this one will blast a tank, that one will save a merchantman.

Brown-stained fingers, clever and sure, backing the boys in khaki, changing desperate defense to smashing attack, and sweeping the Axis wolves back to their dens.

The lights flickered once. Recess.

Ruth checked her tally on the scratch pad, stood up and stretched gratefully. Several of the girls headed out for the canteen. Others simply lay down on the thick linoleum floor and promptly went to sleep.

Bruce came over and took her arm. "Come on, Ruth, I'll treat cokes."

She smiled up at him. "Thanks, Bruce, I'd like one."

They hurried down to the canteen, Ruth pattering along beside him, his well-knit figure and glossy good looks calling many an envious glance from the other girls.

They found a table and he grinned at her over his drink. "Like to go swimming with me tomorrow—I mean today?"

Ruth's eyes opened wide in surprise. The handsome Bruce asking *her* for a date? Darn it. Just when she had practically promised Captain Bob that she would spend the afternoon with him. She contrasted Bruce's flashing smile and dark wavy hair with the captain's moody grin and unruly blond cowlick —Bruce's clean-cut jaw and handsome features with the captain's faintly bull-doggish appearance.

But then, Bruce didn't make her heart go flitter-flutter, did he? And Bruce didn't make her feel sort of warm and comfortable inside, did he?

"Gosh, I'm sorry, Bruce, but I've got a date for today."

"Okay." His grin was rueful. "We'll make it another day soon."

Recess over, hurry back to the shop and settle down into the swing again.

RUTH was absorbed in her job, her yellow fingers flashing under the glass, when a familiar voice behind her said, "How goes it, Miss Barton?"

Startled, she looked up—into the expressionless blue eyes of Captain Bob Hammond. He was standing behind her with two inspectors, all three of them watching her intently.

"Oh, hello, Captain," she smiled shyly.

"I've been watching you. That's a very important job you're doing, young lady." His voice was flat, impersonal.

"Thank you," said Ruth drily, and turned back to her work. Captain Bob and the inspectors strolled on, pausing here and there to watch an operation.

She felt a stab of disappointment. He had been so cold, so mechanical. Then a thought struck her. Of course! He was there on an official trip and didn't want to get personal in front of the inspectors.

A hand touched her on the shoulder. She looked up. It was one of the inspectors.

"Miss Barton, will you please report to the office at once?"

Wide-eyed, Ruth nodded and got up from her stool. Wonderingly, she watched the inspector pick up her scratch pad and start ahead of her out of the shop.

She stepped into the office—and stopped. Captain Bob Hammond was seated at the desk, facing her. Grouped about the room were her shop supervisor and several plant officials.

The inspector laid Ruth's scratch pad down on the desk and went over to stand at the door.

The captain's blue eyes, cold and hard, flicked up at her.

"Will you sit down here, please, Miss Barton?"

A chill of apprehension ran down Ruth's spine. There was an air of tension in the room, an air of watchful waiting. She sat down opposite the captain.

"Yes, Captain Hammond?"

He stared at her steadily for a moment, then picked up some papers. "You are Ruth Barton, twenty-four years old, single, with two years at college and a good business education. What made you take a job in this plant, Miss Barton? I should think that a secretarial position would have been more to your liking."

"Why," stammered Ruth, "I — I thought I'd be helping out more this

way. It seemed more like being in the war, than if I were pounding a typewriter."

Captain Hammond nodded. "Your record here is excellent."

Suddenly angry, Ruth blurted, "And may I ask just what this is all about?"

The captain's eyes met hers steadily. "Sabotage, Miss Barton."

"Sabotage?" Bewildered thoughts raced through her head. The search. The seemingly casual trip through the shop. "But what has that got to do with me?"

"Why, you see, Miss Barton," his voice was cold, flat, "a number of fuses have been coming through without detonator pellets. Instead of the explosive a wad of paper had been substituted. Now, do you understand?"

RUTH jumped to her feet. She struggled to keep the tears from her eyes and the sob from her throat. "I understand a lot of things, Captain, that I didn't understand before! But there are some things *you* don't understand! I had two brothers in the service. I've only got one now. Ted was killed at Singapore. My brother Jerry is flying over Germany every night! You didn't know that, did you? Did you?"

Captain Hammond sighed. "Yes," he said heavily, "I knew that. But look!" He flipped open her scratch pad. "You see? Several pieces have been torn out of the back of the pad, next the cardboard."

Ruth stared at the pad, her mouth dropping open.

"How do you account for that, Miss Barton?"

Ruth's head reeled. She felt a terrific sinking sensation in the pit of her stomach. It couldn't be true!

"Well, Miss Barton?"

"I don't know! I don't know anything about it! I didn't tear those sheets out, and I *didn't* sabotage any fuses!" She glared through tear-filled eyes at Captain Hammond. He was watching her gravely. Then he shrugged.

"For the time being you may go back to your bench, Miss Barton."

Ruth sank down into the chair. She felt weak, sick.

"I don't want to go back to work. I want to go home."

Captain Hammond nodded at her supervisor. "Give her a release." He got up and walked around the desk to stand in front of her. "I'll drive you home."

Ruth jumped to her feet and stamped her foot. "You will not! I'll go home by myself!"

"No. I'll drive you home."

She glared up at him. "Am I under arrest, Captain?"

He grinned. "No. Of course not."

"Then will you kindly stand aside?"

Captain Hammond nodded thoughtfully. "This has been quite a strain for you. Things will look brighter after you've had a bit of sleep. I'll see you later in the day, after lunch."

"After lunch," snapped Ruth, "I'm going to the beach with Bruce, one of the boys in my shop."

"No," he said quietly, "you'd better have a talk with me. Here, dry your eyes, Miss Barton." He held out a handkerchief.

Ruth snatched it and scrubbed her lips—lips that had kissed Captain Hammond.

"I suppose," she said icily, "you want to make love to me again, so you can pump me some more! Goodbye!"

She turned to the supervisor, snatched the work release from his hand and ran out of the room.

IN THE change house she slipped out of her slacks and tunic, passed the

barrier, and donned her own clothes. Scribbling a note to Bruce accepting his invitation to go swimming, she stuck it in his rack on the time clock, punched her own card, and ran out toward the gates of the plant.

Captain Bob Hammond was waiting for her. He grabbed her arm. "Just a moment, Ruth."

Ruth jerked her arm away. "Take your hands off me. I hate you!"

In the gray light of the early dawn, his bull-dog face was impassive. He looked down at her. "Listen, Ruth," his voice was earnest, quiet, "I've got to talk to you."

"Why?" she flared, "haven't you done enough to me? Go away and leave me alone!"

"Ruth, listen to me, please."

"Yes! Listen to you! I listened to you last night! I should have known better, I suppose. The gallant Captain Hammond scraping up an acquaintance with Ruth Barton. Taking her dancing, and whispering nice things into her ear." Her voice broke in a sob. "And all the time you were just trying to trap me!"

The captain shrugged. "Yes, that's all true, of course. But then, it's not all of the story. Don't you see, Ruth? I do not think that you are guilty. I think you are a swell girl, and I've got to clear you; but I can't help you unless you cooperate. I want to be your friend, Ruth."

"I don't believe you!"

The captain sighed. "Ruth, I don't expect you to believe me, now. Later, perhaps you will. In the meantime, the evidence points toward your guilt."

Ruth's shoulders drooped. She felt tired, beaten. "I'm not guilty."

"I believe you." Captain Hammond's voice was quiet, patient. "But the evidence is there. You handle the fuses. You put the detonator charge in. The paper is missing from your pad. The only way to prove you are not guilty is to find out who is trying to frame you. Jump in my car and I'll drive you home." He put his hands on her shoulders, reassuringly.

Ruth felt an urgent desire to put her head on his chest and feel his comforting arms around her. But then, he had been comforting last night, too.

She jerked erect. "Thank you. I've just got time to catch the bus." She turned her back on him and ran to the bus stop.

LATER—tossing on her bed, vainly attempting to sleep, Ruth tried and tried to find a solution to the sabotage. Let's see, she put in the explosive pellet. Then she passed it to Margot. Margot screwed on the cap. Then it went to Bruce, who shoved the fuse into the tightening machine. He didn't handle it except with the cap on. The only person who could remove a pellet would be Margot or one of the inspectors. Margot? Blonde Margot with her incessant chatter about her little daughter, two years old? Impossible.

And then, how did that paper disappear from her scratch pad? Come to think of it, she had been replacing the pads a little oftener than usual, lately. But who could take the sheets out without being noticed? Margot worked next to her. Margot? No. Then who?

Ruth slipped off into fitful slumber, to be wakened from a horrid dream by the strident alarm clock. Time for her date with Bruce.

She got up and dressed, feeling ill. A couple of aspirin might help relieve that splitting headache, but what would take away the heavy feeling inside her?

She decided not to return to the plant. Just send them a note of resignation, requesting that her pay check be sent on to her. Let them find some-

one else to blame for the sabotage. Let the clever Captain Hammond make love to all the other girls in the shop, if he felt like it. She didn't care. Did she? Well?

Ruth went into the bathroom and scrubbed her yellow hands with a brush. With time, the stain would wear off, disappear. But how about the stain on her heart?

An auto horn blared outside. Bruce. She dabbed some powder on her shiny nose, snatched up her bathing suit and cap, and ran down to the street.

"Hi, kid! How do you feel?" Bruce was grinning at her from behind the wheel of his roadster. She jumped in, slammed the door, and he swung the car away from the curb.

Speeding out the lakeshore drive, Ruth was jerked from her moody thoughts by Bruce's concerned voice.

"What's the matter, Ruth? You left the plant so suddenly this morning. Not feeling well? You don't look so good, kid."

"Oh, I feel all right, Bruce. Just had a bad shock, that's all."

Bruce slid his arm sympathetically around her shoulders. "Tell me what it is. Maybe I can help you."

Glad to have someone to talk to, Ruth blurted out the story, indignation fighting the sob in her throat.

"H-m-m-m." Bruce was thoughtful. "I wouldn't quit your job, if I were you. It would look as though you were running away, wouldn't it?"

"Perhaps. But then, if the sabotage still goes on after I have left, they'll know it wasn't me, won't they?"

Bruce took his eyes off the road for a moment to eye her closely. "But why let them chase you away? Why not stay and face it through?"

Ruth shrugged. "Well, perhaps you're right. I'll think it over."

"That's the spirit! Well, here we are. I'll meet you on the beach as soon as you are ready."

She nodded, jumped out of the car and ran into the bathhouse.

THE sea was kicking up quite roughly, and Ruth soon forgot her headache and her troubles, diving through the huge waves with Bruce, and letting the breakers wash over her. Impossible to remain downcast on such a day.

Finally, exhilarated and exhausted by the pounding of the water, they stretched out on the sand to soak up some of the sunshine.

Ruth was idly chatting to Bruce, when her eyes, which had been vacantly looking at Bruce's legs, suddenly focussed on his left ankle.

She was looking at a small brown stain. Yellow-brown, the same color as her fingers.

Ruth wrinkled her brow. Now, how did that get on his ankle. A tetryl stain! Why— Suddenly, its significance smote her. The saboteur.

A series of pictures flashed across her mind—pictures which heretofore had no importance, but now were deadly in their evidence.

Bruce—placing the fuse in the tightening machine, fumbling once in a while, and cursing at his own clumsiness—fumbling long enough to screw off the cap before it was tightened and remove the pellet. Bruce—reaching down to scratch his ankle—and slip the pellet inside his sock, where it stained his skin. Bruce's frequent trips to the washroom—to flush the pellets down the drain.

And Bruce, with his friendly grin, walking over at recess to stand at her bench, chatting to her with his hands behind his back—and tearing sheets off her scratch pad to substitute for the explosive pellet!

Ruth gasped, and looked up at him. He turned lazily to grin at her, and their eyes met, held a long moment. Then he smiled, and jumped to his feet, reaching down for her. "Come on, Ruth. I'll race you out to the float."

Ruth hesitated, but he pulled her to her feet, and she stumbled after him into the breakers. Her brain seemed numb. What should she do?

In a matter of seconds they were swimming side by side, now on the crest of a swell, now in the trough, hidden from the shore by the huge waves.

When they were out a hundred yards or so, Bruce stopped swimming and treaded water. He was looking at her again, and this time he wasn't smiling. It hit her then; he knew that she knew! Terror came as he lunged at her and shoved her head under water, forcing her down.

Suddenly submerged, Ruth struggled frantically, holding her breath, fighting to get up to the surface, up into the sunshine, up into the precious air. Squirming and kicking, Ruth tried to break his hold, but his legs locked around her body, holding her in a vise-like grip. There was a roaring in her ears, and her straining lungs were on fire. The fight oozed out of her. She was tired—tired.

Ruth hardly noticed that Bruce's legs weren't gripping her any longer. Her weakly flailing arms met cloth-covered limbs. Then strong hands pulled her to the surface.

Her head broke through into the air. Blessed air, so clean, so fresh.

From far away, she heard a rough voice, Captain Bob Hammond's voice, say, "Take it easy, Ruth. There's a boat coming."

He was holding her up, holding her head above water, letting her breathe. She gulped in great mouthfuls, cooling her heaving lungs.

The air revived her and her vision cleared. Captain Hammond, his blond hair plastered over his eyes, was treading water and supporting her anxiously.

"Sweetheart! Are you all right?"

Ruth nodded, and automatically began to move her limbs, keeping herself afloat. She looked around.

Bruce's head bobbed up on a wave a hundred feet away. He was swimming shoreward as fast as he could go.

Ruth gagged, spat out some water, and gasped, "You've got to stop him! He's the saboteur! He hid the fuses in his sock; I saw the stain—"

"Yeah!" Captain Hammond grinned. "I know. We found tetryl on his socks. A couple of the boys are waiting for him on the beach."

Ruth decided to wait until later to snuggle her head on his shoulder, only he didn't let her. He kissed her right in the water and suddenly she hoped something would delay the rescue launch.

THE END



Ben smoked a cigarette to quiet his nerves.

FEATURE ATTRACTION —MURDER

By RICHARD W. BISHOP

ILLUSTRATED BY CARL PEMBLE

If you're planning a nerve-wracking stunt, okay, smoke—but not if the stunt's murder!



BEN WROTH knew that the movies didn't provide the best alibi in the world. That was why he chose them. It wouldn't be too obvious. And with his elaborate precautions, it should be safe enough.

Ben knew that he would have to depend on his alibi to pull him through. He would have to answer questions, he expected that. There were only three of them who knew the combination to the big office safe at Central. Only three of them who knew it would be bursting its doors with real pay dirt tonight.

As Ben purchased his ticket at the Majestic, he wondered which of the other two would be holding the bag. Old Carson would be home in bed. Ben knew that. He always went to bed at nine-thirty as regular as the minutes of the hour. A swell alibi that would be for him.

"What time will the pictures be over?" he asked the ticket seller.

"The vaudeville is on now," she told him. "You should be out at eleven-forty."

She'd remember him now. She'd seen him before. Every Tuesday night for nearly a year. A year's planning. But a hundred grand was a good year's pay.

Secretly Ben hoped that Carson wouldn't be pinned for it. He'd much rather see Green get the works. Green, he figured, had been seeing too much of Marge lately. More than made Ben comfortable. But Marge was going away with Ben as soon as the heat was off.

Not that Marge knew the score; she didn't. She might have been squeamish about it. Ben painted pictures to her of a little chicken farm in the country. An uncle had left it to him, he told her. That was a good one. The more he thought about it the more he wished he'd made it a villa in the south. Oh well, that could be changed.

Ben cupped his cigarette and nodded at the ticket taker. "Good show, Jim?" He had cultivated Jim's friendship for months now. The taker nodded. A little absent-minded, Jim, but he'd do. He'd remember.

Ben slid down the aisle and found a seat near the opened exit door. Even in the dark he could picture the crooked corridor that led to the outside. He drew covertly on his cigarette, still cupped in his hand, so the usher wouldn't see him.

The last actor bowed off the stage and the feature began. Ben knew it by heart. He had sat through the same show a week before in a distant city. He waited until the audience had settled down to enjoy the show. Then he flicked away his cigarette and eased himself out of his seat.

THE drive across town was easy. The traffic ban had reduced the number of cars to a minimum. Ben made good time without hurrying. His watch showed that only a half hour had elapsed since he had left the theater.

Ben grinned to himself as he thought of feeble, hard of hearing Trist, the night watchman. What a set-up! Even the black-out regulations were helping his plan.

With black gloves on his hands, Ben let himself into the factory building and, with a different key, into the office. It was as black as pitch but he needed no light. He was on familiar ground. His hand felt and found the circular dial of the huge, old-fashioned safe. A moment later and the same hand lifted out great manila envelopes of currency.

It was as easy as that. Ben carefully locked the office door behind him and soft-shoed his way through the factory corridor.

He was almost at the door when his foot struck something hard and a waste-basket tipped clattering to its side. A side door swung wide, enveloping Ben's form in the shaft of light it poured into the room.

"Who's there?" Trist's silhouette showed in the doorway, a perfect target. Ben was ready for him. He fired only once. Trist crumpled to the floor.

More quickly now, but noiselessly again, Ben slid through the outside door and hurried to his car. He'd have to get back at once, he thought, before the time came for Trist to punch his clock again. Before the alarm.

Driving back across town, Ben lighted another cigarette and turned on the radio. His self-assurance was returning. He could slide through the side door and into the theater without difficulty. Hadn't he practiced it before? The ushers didn't watch the exit door. Its spring lock prevented it from being opened from the outside. Hadn't he a key made for that very purpose? He tossed the manila envelopes into the glove compartment and breathed more freely.

Tomorrow they would ask him where he had been. "At the movies," he'd tell them. He could see their skeptical looks now.

"See anybody you know?"

"Sure." Had he? He should hope to say so. A lot of people. He would give their names. And he would tell them all about the picture too.

It was the kind of alibi that Ben knew would hold. It wasn't a strong, cement-vault alibi that immediately looked suspicious. It was the indisputable, unbreakable alibi that no amount of checking would show to be false. It was the kind of alibi that would let him out and one of the others in.

He was glad Marge had gone out with some friends tonight. Green wouldn't be with her. He chuckled. Perhaps Green had gone to the movies too. Alone. He wondered if Green knew any ticket seller or ticket takers. It didn't make any difference. There was always Carson. Ben flicked his cigarette out of the window and swung his car around the corner toward the theater.

Cold sweat broke out on his forehead. Something had gone wrong! The marquee that had been so brilliantly lighted was black now! Ben was startled, unnerved. He drove by the theater slowly. There was no light from within.

Outside, a few stragglers stood about the door as if watching. They seemed to be talking and they made funny little excited gestures. Ben dared not stop.

He looked at his watch. Eleven o'clock. Time for the regular news broadcast. . . .

A near panic at the Majestic Theater was averted tonight by the quick thinking of the manager, Harvey Spencer. The audience filed out under his direction as the cloth drapes on the east side caught fire and the flames went to the ceiling. The sprinkler system prevented a serious holocaust, but thoroughly drenched the patrons. The fire, which took place shortly after the feature picture had started and was of only a few moments duration, was believed to have been caused by a cigarette dropped by a careless patron who failed to comply with fire regulations. The fire commissioner has ordered an investigation.

Ben swung to his right and toward the turnpike leading out of town. But somehow he knew that out there state troopers would be waiting, hunting for him. . . .

THE END

COPS' COLLEGE

LEADING colleges throughout the country have opened their classrooms and laboratories to thousands of policemen, detectives, sheriffs and other peace officers who have turned students. They are eagerly learning to fight criminals in the best and most scientific ways.

Sometime ago, in a quiet Philadelphia suburb, an automobile ran wild. A young girl, hurrying to keep a date, glanced up too late. A cry, a thud, and a crumpled heap in the street. But the speeder dashed on, not even glancing back.

A few days later, in another suburb, the scene was repeated. But out from a side street a roadster knifed ahead of the speeder, forced him to the curb. Out jumped a young policeman, to scan the driver's license papers, also the car from top to bottom.

"You and I are going for a ride" said the policeman firmly. But first he carefully removed something from the running board of the car and put it into an envelope. At the police station he gave this to the sergeant.

"Is that what they teach you at Cops' College?" asked the sergeant. He asked no more when he saw the report; threads from silk stockings and long human hairs. The speeder, who was also the hit-and-run driver, is now in prison.

That policeman was one of the first products of the movement. It started in the four counties around Philadelphia. There are substantial Philadelphia business men who are tempting marks for the criminal, there are industries that require protection, at times against raiding city crooks in automobiles. In general, this is the problem throughout the country, how to get better-trained suburban and township police.

A Philadelphia citizen suggested one school for the region, something like the G-Men's school in Washington with G-Men as teachers. The G-Men proved receptive to the idea, and so were other "professors" from the Pennsylvania State Police. The school was opened in rooms offered by Swarthmore College.

The teachers demonstrate different ideas and teach one how to gather evidence, how to present it in court to make a case stick and escape a dismissal with angry words from a judge.

The elementary course for the "Cops" covers practical work from patrolling to undercover detection, traffic, fingerprinting, latent evidence, legal medicine, crime prevention, preparation of evidence, etc.

Beyond this is the advanced course that will made an officer a specialist in identification or other phases of police work.

More and more colleges are pioneering in this new field. However, few can maintain extensive crime laboratories like the excellent ones at Northwestern, Harvard and Chicago.

Good citizens everywhere are working to extend this movement. They want every community better protected not only from its now criminals, but from its neighbors' criminals. They want everywhere, in cities, towns and villages, better-trained law officers, detectives, fingerprint experts and chemists using methods more efficient and familiar to all.

In any emergency these men will know not only what to do, but how to do it. Then city and country will be safe for Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen and the children to live in.—*H. Randy Norman.*



She heard footsteps receding rapidly . . .

DEATH RIDES A CONVOY

By WILLIAM LAWRENCE HAMLING

Even aboard an American convoy German thugs tried to snatch Marsh's precious blueprints

COMMANDER ROGER MARSH settled back on the leather cushions of the taxi and relaxed. It was all over now but the shouting. He had finished plans for America's own secret weapon, the legendary "land battleship" safely on his person, and the weapon itself was sealed in hundreds of crates aboard a Liberty ship ready to sail at midnight. It would join the convoy somewhere in the Atlantic.

Humming softly to himself, Commander Marsh looked at his wrist watch. It was 2310, just fifty minutes before sailing time. But there was no hurry. He'd be there in a few more minutes. He patted the black brief case on his lap and smiled. The admiral had been worried he recalled.

"Be careful, Roger," Vice Admiral Cowell had said just a short time before. "The enemy would do anything to get their hands on those plans. I'm almost afraid to let you carry out this assignment alone."

Commander Marsh had replied grimly. "I realize that, sir, but it's best I do carry it out alone. We'd only draw attention if more men were put on the job. And the fewer who know about it the better."

They had shook hands on it then. And Commander Marsh had left the admiral's office with the brief case. Now he relaxed against the taxi's back seat. If only he had been able to see Betty Cowell before he sailed, then everything would have been complete. She had been hiding something from him for weeks with that devilish little smile of hers, a surprise she had said. But hell, you couldn't have your cake and eat it too.

The taxi was rounding a corner into Front street. Ahead loomed the somber vastness of the Navy shipyards. The driver was whistling *Mairzy-Doats* softly to himself.

The truck came out of nowhere. Two bright lights had magically appeared off to the right side of the cab and bore down upon it at terrific speed.

The cab driver let out a curse and whipped the cab sharply to the left. But it was too late.

There was a screeching of brakes. The lights of the truck veered on a forty-five degree angle, and then the body of the truck side-swiped the taxi against the curb and up on the sidewalk. The cab rolled over on its side and stopped.

The truck pulled to a halt and two men leaped from the driver's seat. A street light's rays glinted on short snub-nosed automatics. The men raced over

to the smashed taxi. One of them jumped on the tiltel running board and pulled open the back door.

Commander Marsh lay sprawled against the opposite side of the cab. He was attempting to crawl to his knees and a slow trickle of blood oozed down from his forehead. The brief case lay on the seat beside him.

"That's it!" A harsh voice croaked out. A hand reached inside.

Commander Marsh was hazily aware of what went on. There was a blinding pain in his head where he had struck the metal hand rail on the front seat. He heard someone moving beside him grasping for the brief case. Feebly he struck out.

The man cursed and lashed the barrel of his gun across Marsh's jaw. The Commander slumped.

Down the street came the shrill blast of a whistle.

"Hurry up! It's the cops!" The man outside called. Then his partner joined him with the brief case. Together they raced to the idling truck. Gears clashed and the truck moved off into the night.

"THAT was a hell of a close call!" Captain Henry Marlowe, USMS, commanding the liberty ship, *Tampa,* paced the length of his quarters.

Commander Roger Marsh was sitting on the edge of the captain's bunk, a bandage draped across his forehead. There was a cigarette in his hand. A grim whiteness was around his mouth.

"I had a feeling something like that would happen," he said. "That's why I took the brief case along. Naturally I didn't have the plans in it. I kept those taped against my body. All those agents got was a sheaf of blank paper.

"But it proves one thing. We're being watched by a cunning group, and I won't feel safe until we land this convoy at the BI."

The captain nodded. He continued to pace the cabin thoughtfully.

"I don't think you'll have to worry any more, though. We're on our way right now. And I'd like to see anyone try something aboard my ship! Besides the antecedents of every member of the crew on this ship have been examined three generations back! Ensign Dobel personally chose the crew. They're a fine bunch of merchant seamen." He paused, and a smile crossed his rugged features. "Incidentally, there's someone aboard you know."

Roger Marsh looked up. He frowned. "Someone I know?"

Captain Marlowe nodded. "We've got a couple of new radio operators, WAVES. One of them is Admiral Cowell's daughter."

Marsh nearly dropped the cigarette. "Betty?" he said in disbelief. "A WAVE? But that's impossible!"

Captain Marlowe shrugged. "Maybe so, but the old man himself gave her the appointment. It was as neat a bit of Naval politics as I've seen in twenty years of service. I gathered that she had been keeping her work a secret."

Commander Marsh got slowly to his feet. He felt gingerly at the bandage on his head and started for the door.

"Where are you going?" Captain Marlowe asked, smiling.

"Radio room, sir," Marsh replied and strode from the cabin.

THE night was dark. Heavy clouds cloaked the Moon as Marsh made his way aft to the radio room. The Atlantic rolled in billowy swells. There was a fairly stiff breeze blowing down from the north and the clean salty air helped to clear the dull throb that still lingered in his head.

There were no visible lights aboard the *Tampa*. Somewhere off in the darkness Roger Marsh knew a United States

destroyer would be lurking, ready to come about should help be needed. They would join the convoy sometime on the following afternoon, far from land. The exact spot only Captain Marlowe knew.

Marsh was painfully aware of the importance of the cargo the liberty ship carried. With the invasion of western Europe only a short time off, perhaps any day now, the newly developed "land battleship" of the United States would play a major part in the operations. For it was just what its name implied. And nothing short of a 105mm. could even attempt to stop it.

The enemy would stop at nothing to get a look at those plans that were accompanying the finished product overseas. And if the sub pack of Hitler could get the convoy's position there would be hell to pay.

He was feeling his way along the starboard rail when somebody loomed before him. He couldn't see clearly, but there was a deeper patch of blackness blocking his way. He stopped and called out.

"Who's there!"

Nobody answered. There was a scuffle of feet in the darkness. Marsh tensed. He drew his breath in sharply as something lashed out against his jaw. But this time he was ready. He rolled with the blow and ducked down against the railing. Then a foot smashed against his chest and the breath whistled from his lungs. He knew that the next blow would finish him. But it never came. A voice called out in the darkness.

"Did someone call out here?"

Footsteps hurried off and faded away. Commander Marsh crawled slowly to his feet and stood leaning against the railing catching his breath. A blackout flash beam shed a pin-beam of light in the night. He walked toward it. A A voice cried out.

"Roger! Good heavens, what's happened to you?"

Commander Marsh knew that voice. He knew it as well as he knew his own. It was Betty Cowell. She grasped his arm and pulled him in a cabin. The door shut behind them and a light clicked on.

HE stood swaying on his feet blinking against the sudden illumination.

She was clad in drab dungarees. Her raven hair peeped out from under a seaman's cap. Her eyes were wide, almost fearful. He glared at her.

"Betty, what are you doing aboard this ship!" he demanded. His tone was angry. Inwardly he was cursing himself for allowing his attacker to get away. This was the second time in one night. And he suddenly knew that the taxi episode wasn't going to be the last.

The girl moved over to the radio set and seated herself before the dials and key. She looked up at him.

"This is the surprise I've been saving, Roger," she said. "I joined the WAVES two months ago. I'm a radio operator now. I wanted to do my bit too—you men get all the glory! Besides," she added lowering her gaze, "I wanted to be with you overseas. I couldn't bear the thought of anything happening to you . . ." Her voice trailed off. Roger Marsh looked down at her and he knew he should have taken her in his arms. But that was out now. They were on the high seas. A precious cargo was sealed in the ship's bowels, a cargo that well might mean the difference between success and failure in the coming operations. Too, there was an enemy on board, and there was an enemy waiting out in the deep waters—waiting to send tons of high explosives hurtling into them. Both unseen enemies, but both malignantly present.

"This is no place for a woman!" he said angrily.

She gazed up at him in surprise. "Why not? If it wasn't me it would be someone else—you know that! Or is it that you'd prefer me to call you 'sir' now that I'm in a uniform!"

Roger Marsh laughed at the fire that had leaped into her eyes. She was a true Cowell all right. The admiral must have gotten quite a kick out of assigning his daughter to the same ship Marsh was on. Not that he would have too much to say about it. She would have demanded it. Anyway she was here, and he couldn't keep down the glad feeling it produced inside him.

"Roger, you haven't told me what's happened to you, why the bandages—and your face is swollen!" There was anxiety in her voice.

"It's nothing, Betty, I had a little accident coming to the pier. A truck ran into my cab."

He leaned over and planted a kiss on her mouth.

"Now get back to your job. I've got some things to attend to. And don't expect any special favors just because I'm going to marry you!" There was a trace of humor in his voice.

"I don't expect anything, *sir!*" she said defiantly.

The door opened slightly and someone quickly stepped inside. Marsh turned around. A slim ensign saluted him.

"I've been looking for you, sir," he began.

"Oh, hello, Dobel. Glad to see you." Marsh replied.

"Sir, there's something queer going on—I just came from your quarters, and well, I wish you'd come along."

Roger Marsh frowned. He glanced aside at Betty Cowell. She was gazing at them quizzically.

"Come on," Marsh motioned to the ensign. Together they slipped through the door and outside into the night.

"YOU didn't see or hear anyone go aft from this deck a few minutes ago, did you, Dobel?" Marsh asked as they descended a spiral stairway.

"Why, no sir, I didn't."

Marsh entered a narrow companionway and the ensign followed. He stopped before the door to his quarters. It was open. A frown crossed his face. The interior of the room was a shambles. His clothing was scattered over the floor and bunk, the drawers of his desk were pulled out, papers scattered haphazardly, even the bunk itself was torn up. The whole thing gave the appearance of a hasty ransacking.

"This is what I meant, sir. I passed here just a few minutes ago and the room was like this. Shall I inform Captain Marlowe?"

Marsh walked into the room and looked around. It all began to click now. Whoever the spy was he was wasting no time and sparing no effort. That was why he had been attacked on the above deck. The rat must have just left the companionway when he'd come from the captain's quarters. Marsh faced Dobel.

"I understand, Dobel, that you were in charge of the crew of merchant seamen signed on for this voyage."

The ensign nodded. "That's right, Commander, I checked the lists of every man, but the actual signing and declaring I left to Officer Higgins. Do you think one of the men . . ."

Marsh walked over and sat on the edge of his desk. He gazed closely at Dobel. "I don't know what to think yet," he replied. "But I'm damned well going to start finding out. I want a complete list of every man on board this ship, with all the available records of each of them."

"Very well, sir," Dobel replied. "Shall I send someone in to straighten up your quarters?"

"No, I'll take care of this myself. And incidentally, don't mention it to anyone—not even Capain Marlowe. We've got a long trip ahead of us and there'll be enough tension as it is."

The ensign nodded, saluted, and left.

Roger Marsh closed the door to his quarters and began to clean up the mess. He worked swiftly and silently and his mind turned over this latest development. Whoever was behind this sinister plot was getting desperate. Caution was being discarded. It was obvious that someone wanted to get the plans before the convoy was fully organized on the high seas. Roger Marsh knew that he must catch whoever was behind the plot before the convoy got fully under way.

He seated himself at the desk after awhile and lit a cigarette. A knock sounded at the door.

"Come in," he called out.

The door opened and a short stocky man with a sheaf of papers in his hand stood in the opening.

"C.P.O. Higgins, sir. Ensign Dobel said you wanted a list of the crew."

Roger Marsh eyed the crew chief and nodded.

"Have you kept a close check on the men tonight?" he asked.

The C.P.O. frown. "I'm not sure I know just what you mean, Commander," he replied.

"I mean do you know if the men have been at their stations—and not wandering about the ship—especially around the radio room?"

Higgins shook his head. "As far as I know, sir, nobody left his post, but I'll make a check on it. Is there anything wrong?"

Marsh waved his hand. "Nothing special, but check on it. That's all."

Higgins saluted and left.

Some time later Marsh sat back in his chair and wearily glanced at his watch. It was 0430 and he had drawn a blank. There wasn't a thing in the records to even hint at a possible agent. He sighed heavily and looked across at his bunk. It was time he got some rest. There would be plenty to do before the day was over. The convoy would be organizing for the long perilous trek through sub infested waters.

He made sure his cabin was locked before he turned in.

IT was noon when Commander Marsh joined Captain Marlowe on the bridge. The captain stood with his binoculars raised gazing out to sea. Marsh shaded his eyes and glanced over the water. His heart leaped. Barely visible to the naked eye were a series of small dots against the horizon. Faint wisps of smoke from countless funnels smuddged the skyline. It was a glorious sight, this forming of the convoy. It never failed to thrill Marsh every time he witnessed it.

They seemed to come out of nowhere, these ships, all meeting at a predetermined spot in a mighty vastness of water. A half mile astern a sleek destroyer plowed through the rolling swells, black smoke belching from its funnel. Helio signals flickered across the water. Captain Marlowe turned.

"Oh, it's you, Marsh. We're getting ready to form a rendezvous. It's a great relief to me. As far as I'm concerned these first hours at sea are always the hardest. You never know what is coming when you're alone. Now the Navy can take over."

Marsh smiled. "That's our job, sir. I've got my share of it right here."

Captain Marlowe looked closely at him. "Still thinking about that taxi affair?"

"It's more than that, I'm afraid." Marsh replied. He recounted the events of the night in a few sentences. Marlowe swore in astonishment.

"You mean there's someone aboard *my ship*—an enemy agent?"

Marsh nodded grimly. "There is. And I've checked over the crew myself without finding anything. Our man is devilishly smart."

Captain Marlowe stroked his chin worriedly.

"I'll have Dobel post a guard at every companionway for the rest of the trip!" he said.

Commander Marsh shook his head as he gazed out to sea.

"I don't think that's the answer, Captain. He might be one of the guards you posted— and even if he wasn't, it would make him wary. No, I want to catch him, not scare him."

The captain snorted. "I'm damned if I can see any other way. As long as he concentrates on you what chance will you have? If it was someone else . . ."

Marsh turned his gaze from the sea.

"Someone else?" he said half to himself. He faced the captain for a moment and then came to a decision.

"I prefer to handle this in my own way, Captain. I think there's a chance to get him before the convoy gets fully under way."

He left the captain standing staring after him. Marsh's eyes were grim as he sought his quarters. Once there he deliberately stripped off his clothes and removed a sheaf of papers that were taped to his body.

THE long rolling swells of the Atlantic became flecked with countless ships as the rendezvous continued. It was like the forming of a gigantic puzzle, with eash piece a ship, fitting into place with the precision and ease of a carefully planned move. Liberty ships took their place among capital ships of the fleet. Sleek, swift destroyers plowed through the swells, darting in and out like sheep dogs protecting their flock. Helio signals flashed across the water between ships.

All afternoon Captain Marlowe stuck to his bridge, receiving messages and answering. Off and on he wondered what Commander Marsh was doing. He hadn't appeared since noon. And the dread grew in Marlowe's soul as he viewed the might of the convoy, thinking that there was a man who could put that vital supply line in peril.

Toward dusk the *Tampa's* position was firmly plotted, and Captain Marlowe began thinking of supper. He turned from the rail to find Commander Marsh approaching. There was a tired look on his lean features.

"Everything going according to schedule, sir?" he asked.

Captain Marlowe nodded, handed Marsh his glasses. He noticed that the commander held a packet in one hand.

"Yes, not a hitch in the plan. The convoy is well on its way now. And it's a load off my mind. What happened to you this afternoon?"

A wan smile crossed Marsh's face. "I've been busy, sir," he glanced around the bridge. Ensign Dobel was busy with dividers and scales on the wall charts. C. P. O. Higgins was coming up from the port companionway. Marsh motioned to him. Higgins approached and saluted.

"Did you want me, sir?"

Marsh nodded. "Go below and bring radio operator Cowell up here."

Ensign Dobel looked up from his charts and stared at Marsh. Captain Marlowe frowned. Higgins saluted and left.

"What do you want with her?" the captain queried.

Marsh pocketed the packet and adjusted the binoculars to his eyes.

"It was just something I thought of, sir," he replied. He studied the convoy in the fading light for a few minutes. Then steps approached behind him. He turned. Higgins had brought Betty Cowell to the bridge. There was puzzlement on her face. She carried a brown handbag under her arm. Marsh took her aside. He spoke lowly.

"Betty, there's something I want you to do for me."

The frown of puzzlement increased on her face.

"What is it, Roger?" she asked.

He took the packet from his pocket. "I want you to hold something for me for a few days."

She looked at the packet. "Not a present for me, is it?"

He laughed. "It might be, in a roundabout way. Just take care of it, I'll explain later."

She took the packet and put it in her handbag. Then she gazed up at him.

"I won't even pretend to understand," she said. "Is that all?"

He nodded. "I'll drop in on you a little later tonight. "You're going on duty right away, aren't you?"

"Yes. I'll be on until 0600. Don't forget now."

He smiled briefly as she saluted him and left the bridge. Higgins followed the girl.

"What was that all about?" Captain Marlowe walked up to Marsh. The Commander moved alongside him staring out to sea.

"Just a hunch, Captain," he replied.

Marlowe snorted. "Have it your own way, but it better be good. I'm going below to eat. Care to join me?"

Marsh nodded. "I'll be along right away. I want to get at the helio first though. I'll join you in a few minutes."

Captain Marlowe shrugged and turned away. Commander Marsh dismissed the seaman at the signal station.

NIGHT was a black blanket cloaked over the Atlantic. Clouds from the north had rolled onward obscuring the face of the moon. But the convoy steamed ahead unmindful of the darkness.

Betty Cowell sat before the glowing radio set of the *Tampa*, humming softly to herself. She glanced at her watch. It was 2330 and Roger hadn't showed up yet. He had been acting queer. Could it be he resented the fact that she was now in a uniform? Or was it something bothering him that he wouldn't admit? And why had he given her that packet? She glanced at the chair beside the door where her handbag lay.

She almost jumped when a knock came from the door. A smile spread over her face. That would be Roger.

"Coming," she called out.

She left the radio set and walked over to the metal door. She switched out the overhead light before opening it. Blackout regulations were strict on the high seas.

The door opened and the cool Atlantic breeze fanned her face.

"Roger?" she called softly.

No one answered. She stepped through the opening.

A hand reached out in the darkness and closed over her throat. Another hand grabbed her arms and pinioned them behind her. A wave of fear coursed through her body and she struggled, trying to scream. But it was as if a vise had been clamped around her neck. Blood pounded in her head. She kicked out futilely. The hand tightened on her throat and her senses reeled away.

Someone breathed hard in the darkness as expert hands trussed and gagged the girl. Then she lay prone in the companionway.

A tiny bead of light flickered from a small blackout flash. It fell on the girl's handbag inside the door. An eager hand reached out for it. The light disappeared. There was a rummaging in the darkness and the sound of a quickened breath. Then the handbag dropped to the floor of the companionway.

The door of the radio room closed almost silently. Minutes ticked by slowly. Betty Cowell regained her senses and struggled feebly in the darkness. There was terror in her heart as she lay there helpless. A dim understanding was beginning to grow in her mind.

Suddenly she stopped her struggles. Footsteps sounded on the deck. Someone moved beside her. She couldn't see in the blackness, but there was someone. A foot touched her. Then a hand rested against her cheek. She tried to cry out but only mute sounds issued from the gag. Then the hand was gone. A voice whispered.

"Quiet!"

She stilled. The footsteps moved away from her. That voice—

The door to the radio room opened suddenly before her. She caught her breath. A dim glow from the set issued from the room. Then a shadow hurtled past the door.

There was a loud exclamation. A scuffle. The blast of two shots filled the night. Then there was a groan and quiet.

A few moments later someone came out of the radio room, gun in hand. He stooped beside the girl and loosened her bonds.

"It's all over now, honey," the voice whispered in her ear.

CAPTAIN MARLOWE paced the length of his cabin. He faced Commander Marsh and Betty Cowell.

"I can't believe it!" he muttered. "Higgins was a trusted man—Chief Petty Officer!"

Marsh nodded grimly. "They usually are trusted men. Men that we'd never suspect. But I knew it had to be someone on the inside. An ordinary seaman wouldn't wander about a ship at sea unchallenged."

Betty Cowell interrupted. "But why did you give me that packet, Roger?"

Marsh lit a cigarette. "I used you more or less as bait, honey. I knew I'd never get him unless I could put him on someone else's track. I laid a trap for him. This afternoon I drew up a set of false plans, not complete of course, and put them in that packet. I gave them to you on the bridge, so that anyone interested in what I was doing would see it. Then I hid in the companionway tonight and waited.

"Higgins took the bait. He couldn't afford to lose such an opportunity. He thought you had the plans and did just what I'd been hoping. I had to kill him when he pulled a gun on me. But that saves us a courtmartial!"

"But he was at the radio sending out information!" Captain Marlowe stormed.

Marsh nodded. "That's right. I wanted him to do that. You remember before I came down to supper I said I wanted to use the helio? I signaled a destroyer and instructed them to cover the short wave bands tonight. By now they've got the position of the sub pack Higgins was contacting. I wanted him to use that radio. Our destroyers will have a surprise package all their own for Heinie. But I'm afraid he won't appreciate it.!"

A broad grin crossed Captain Marlowe's face.

"That was good thinking on your part, Commander. I'll see that you get credit for it too."

Roger Marsh took the girl's arm.

"Forget it, sir. All in a day's work." He looked at Betty Cowell. "You're supposed to be on duty, aren't you?"

She nodded rubbing her throat apprehensively.

"Don't worry, no one else will grab you tonight—that is, not an enemy agent, anyway," he said, pulling her to the door. "We'll sit out the rest of your watch together."

WANNA BUY SOME DOUGH?

MOST of us think of advertising as being a characteristic of modern hig business. The newspaper chains, the broadcasting systems send out millions of words to convince us to buy a certain car, eat a certain cereal, use a certain toothpaste. Every manufacturer is determined to convince us that his product is the cheapest, the most exclusive and of the finest quality.

Advertising is an old game. It has been used by politicians, by kings and queens, and even by criminals. As a matter of fact, some criminals have been able to put advertising to use in a much more artistic and effective manner than many other groups.

For example, read this circular from a police file that originally was sent by a group of counterfeiters to prospective passers of fake money.

"No doubt when you receive this letter you will say it is some trap for you to get into trouhle; but such is not the case. I promise you this, as true as there is a God in Heaven, I obtained your name through a friend of a friend of mine who passed through your place, so this is all I know of you; and on my solemn oath I speak the plain candid truth and I swear before the Almighty God in Heaven, my purpose is far from harming you either in word, look or action; and should you make up your mind to answer this letter, I will give you my word of honor that no person, man, woman, or child shall ever hear from my mouth the least thing that ever passed between us and I will keep this promise as sacred as I would my oath before God in Heaven.

"I will be plain with you. I am dealing in articles of paper goods, 1s, 2s, 5s, 10s, and 20s, . . . (Do you understand?) I cannot be plainer until I know your heart is true to me, then I will send you full and plain particulars that I mean you right, and will satisfy and convince you that I can furnish you with a fine, safe, profitable article, that can he used in any manner and for all purposes, and no danger. Now understand me fair and square; I ask no money in advance nor do I want it. I want to give you plain and positive proofs that, should I give you my assistance, I can and will help you out of any money or business troubles you may be in, and no matter to what extent; and no power on the face of God's earth need be the wiser for it unless you hetray me; and as my intentions are square and upright to you, and as I never have or will harm you by word, look, or action, I ask you before Heaven, as a man of honor and principle, not to expose me or betray me. And if I have made a mistake in sending you this letter, I ask you to forgive me, and let the matter rest where it is, for my intentions are as upright to you as Heaven itself, for man can have honor and principle no matter what his business may be in this world, so do not harm me, for my motto in life has been, if you can't do a fellow-being some good, do him no harm, no matter what his calling may be.

"Now a word of advice in regard to this business. There are some unprincipled men in this city advertising goods the same as mine. But before God and man they are far from it. They will send your circulars and promise all things and should you be foolish enough to send them money, that is the last you will hear of them or your money, and there are other firms here dealing in green goods of a very poor quality and not safe to handle. Now I am not writing this letter through malice or selfishness to get your trade, but to warn you against them should you at any time receive their circulars (as these people have their agents going from one state to another, getting storekeepers' names, and in fact names of people in all kinds of business) and should you make up your mind write and place confidence in me, with a view of trading with me, I wlll take it as a matter of honor and strict friendship between us, if you will notify me if these people send circulars to you, as I will prove they are not reliable men to trade with, and this is the Almighty God's honest truth, as I am the only person who can furnish you with a safe and profitable article that will stand a critlcal test, and I will prove each and every promise I have given you before I will expect or receive one dollar.

"I will as a test of honor and confidence on your part request the return of this letter. I will then know you mean me no harm, for I will not answer any communication unless it is returned to me.

"I will not deviate from this rule and on my sacred oath and honor, before God and man, I will return yours."

The letter was signed "Yours in honor and friendship."—*Arnold Young.*

COME HOME

By BRUNO FISCHER

ILLUSTRATED BY BRADY



CHAPTER I

Father and Son

I ENTERED the managing editor's office without knocking and flung the page-proof on the table. "What the hell's the idea?" I demanded.

The page-proof fluttered to the edge of the desk and started to fall off. Lee Langer lunged for it and slid it back to safety.

"You forget," Langer said softly, "that reporters don't talk like that to managing editors."

It wasn't so long ago that he had been a reporter himself. That was before he had married the publisher's daughter and buried an unsavory past. There's nothing like being the boss' son-in-law to get ahead.

"I don't pause to choose my language when you accuse my father of murder," I said.

Lee Langer showed his teeth. They were strong white teeth in a deeply tanned face and he liked to display them on any provocation. "Look who's talking. You've accused your father of worse than murder."

He was right, in a way. I was in the midst of writing an exposé of corruption in the city administration. My father was the mayor.

"I've kept my father's name out of print," I protested. "Personally he's not a crook."

"Not directly. Maybe he never lined his own pockets. But he likes being mayor and he has his eye on the governor's mansion, and he couldn't be dog catcher without Ezra Rice's support. You're not fooling anybody, Jerry. The mayor is head of the city government and he's not blind. He knows what's going on." He flattened out the page-

TO MURDER

What can you do when your own family plants a murder frame-up on you?

proof on his desk. "This story doesn't accuse the mayor of murder."

"Not in so many words, because you're leery of libel. But the implication is plain."

"Sure." Lee Langer spread his palms. "Like in your exposé."

He had me there. God knows I'd spent enough sleepless nights coming to terms with myself. How much loyalty does a son owe to his father? How much integrity to his job and to his own soul? The two conflicted. I had made up my mind. Yet . . .

"But murder!" I said.

"It's been murder all along." Langer's jaw ridged, the way it always did when he was worked up. "Wasn't it



"It's the same knife you flourished before the family! You killed her!"

murder when five people died in that River Street fire three months ago? That place was a trap, but Andrew Weems, the building commissioner, didn't enforce the law. His palm was amply greased by the landlord. Your father appointed Weems and backed him in the investigation. That's only one example. Read your own articles for the others."

I HAD no argument. It was that particular fire, and the scandal I dug up while covering the story, that had made up my mind for me. It had also made Andrew Weems, the building commissioner, try to go honest.

"I can understand your reluctance to rake up the Weems business, so I assigned one of the other men to it," Langer went on. "It's a lot better than the vague stuff in your exposé. After the fire, Weems phoned me that he would show up in my office the following afternoon to spill his guts about Ezra Rice and the mayor and the rest of the city hall gang. Either he talked to somebody he shouldn't have or his conversation with me was overheard. An hour later Weems' body dropped eight stories from his office window and was smashed on the sidewalk. Fell or jumped was the official verdict. Everybody knows he was pushed."

"My father wouldn't stand for deliberate murder."

Langer shrugged. "It goes further than that. Andrew Weems wasn't a good crook. He was pompous and religious and had a conscience. The fire got him down. He might have jumped, but not right after making an appointment to tell all to the *Post*. If he had seen me the next day, page one of the *Post* would have kicked the mayor out of office within twenty-four hours."

I said: "So it was murder. There were others, Ezra Rice especially, who had as much to lose."

Langer fingered the page-proof. "You read this story. You know now that Jones dug up the fact that the mayor was seen half a block from the building, walking away in a hurry, a few minutes after Weems' body hit the sidewalk."

It was the nasty sort of thing newspapers do. The two things, the murder and the mayor's presence nearby, weren't legal proof. The paper had only to present the facts, plus the obvious motive, and let the readers draw their own conclusions.

"If that story is on the street," I said, "then so will I be."

Langer's eyebrows arched. "Is that a threat? You mean you'll quit?"

"If you consider my quitting a threat."

Langer thought it over, then his teeth flashed again. "You win, Jerry. Not because good reporters aren't a dime a dozen, but because of your mysterious source of information about administration dirt." He grinned. "Don't tell me you get the dirt from your father?"

"You're not funny," I said.

"So I've been told." Langer picked up his pencil as a sign of dismissal. "Your copy in yet, Jerry?"

"You'll have it before deadline."

I went out to the city room and sat down at my desk, but I didn't write anything. I was thinking of Dad and what close friends we used to be before he got the political bug and became mayor, with Ezra Rice's support.

It was weeks now since I had seen him. We had drifted apart ever since I vigorously disapproved of what he was doing as mayor. Now everybody was talking about how a newspaperman's son was fighting to keep his mayor father out of the governorship. I didn't want to do that. All I wanted

was to tell the truth because it needed telling.

Dad would understand. He always had in the past. He used to tell me how self-respect was the prime necessity to make life worth living. Maybe all he needed was his son to stand at his side and help him kick out Ezra Rice and his boodle gang.

Quickly, before I could change my mind, I grabbed my hat.

FOR a moment, as I turned into my father's house, I thought it was an insect buzzing past my ear. Then I turned and saw the dagger imbedded in the telephone pole at my shoulder. It quivered like a live thing in fury at having failed. I stared at the dagger in wonder before fear came. Then I too trembled.

It had been very close. And it had come from the direction of the house, which meant that it had been thrown from a window or from behind one of the shrubs.

A twig snapped. I tensed, peering into the darkness. There was a second sound farther away, and I knew that whoever had thrown the dagger was leaving in a hurry.

I started forward, then stopped. Unarmed and in that darkness, pursuit would be either futile or suicidal.

In the telephone pole, the dagger was quivering only gently now. I gripped the smooth bone handle and tugged the point out of the wood. The size of the blade surprised me. It was thin as a needle, almost, and no more than two inches long. It would have had to bury itself to the hilt in a particularly vulnerable spot to be effective.

Then I understood. I had not been slated for murder—not yet, anyway. The dagger was thrown to miss me or to inflict a minor wound. In other words, a warning of what would happen to me if I refused to be frightened off.

Dad? Would he, if he were desperate enough, pull some such stunt to scare me? But he might have *missed* missing me. The dagger hadn't passed far from my throat, where it could have been fatal.

Dropping the dagger into my coat pocket, I strode up the walk to the house.

When I rang the bell, there was the usual pause, followed by the weary shuffle of Mary's feet carrying a body which was growing too heavy with advancing years. The door opened, and automatically Mary's face creased into an eager smile. She had been our housekeeper since I was born. Then Mary remembered and frowned with disapproval.

"Jerry, why do you do it?" she scolded. "You're breaking your poor father's heart."

My bitterness came out in low, harsh laughter. "Nothing will break his heart except being defeated at an election."

"Please, Jerry!" Mary said. "He's been good to you. Be good to him."

In the living room the radio went on. The voice of a news commentator came in in the middle of a sentence. He was discussing the fact that Mayor George Norwood's apparent majority at the coming state convention was not as stable as it had been before the Center City *Post* had started to muckrake his administration.

"His own son!" Mary said accusingly.

Fingering the dagger in my pocket, I moved past her up the hall and turned at the living room door. Dad's voice said, "Who is it, Mary?" and suddenly we were face to face in the hall.

DAD looked more tired than I had ever seen him, and his shoulders were no longer as straight as they had

been. He was still a fine figure of a man, though, with little surplus fat in spite of his years. There was a quiet dignity about him which graced the mayor's office. He would be the handsomest governor in the history of the state.

"Hello, Dad," I said, sticking out my hand.

He looked at my hand without moving his arm from his side. "What do you want?"

"To visit you and Sis."

"Are you sure it isn't to spy on me?" he said bitterly.

My heart twisted in me at the thought that here we were, my father and I, deadly enemies. I put my hand on his arm. "Dad, if we can have a long talk together——"

He knocked my hand away. "Get out!"

I'd known it would be like this. I knew Dad. I spun toward the door.

"Jerry!" my sister Carrie called.

I turned. Carrie was stepping around Dad. She put up her lovely face to be kissed.

Her mouth under mine was cold. She's forcing herself, I thought. She hates me as much as Dad does, but she's trying to fight her hate.

She kept up the act. She tucked a hand through my arm and led me into the living room.

There were visitors. Ezra Rice and his son Kerby were standing at the radio, listening to the commentator.

Ezra Rice was the political kingpin of the state. He held no official position himself except that of chairman of the Party executive committee. A thin, dour, wild-haired man, he was not anything like the caricatures of a typical politician. He had made my father mayor and he would make him governor.

I stopped at Carrie's side, wondering how to take him. Ezra Rice decided for me. He did not greet me. His thin mouth tightened; that was all. I was his enemy, and he was remorseless with his enemies.

In my pocket I felt the weight of the dagger. Ezra Rice would not stop at murder if he thought it necessary to protect himself. The juiciest parts of my exposé concerned him.

"Would you like a drink, Jerry?" Carrie asked, trying to sound bright and gay.

"No, thanks," I said.

There was an awkward silence. Then Kerby Rice spoke. "Have you heard the news, Jerry? Carrie and I are to be married."

So it had come to that. The political boss and his number one stooge were to be united by the marriage of their children.

"I've heard rumors," I muttered and looked at Carrie.

She faced me boldly with that set smile of hers. She probably liked Kerby. Well, he was young and handsome and successful—a lawyer who cashed in on the fat fees a friendly administration could throw his way. But I was thinking chiefly that Kerby had as much as his father or the mayor to fear from my exposé. He was a sportsman and would have the ability to throw a dagger from a house window.

And there was nothing to be said by anybody. Dad was squatting in front of the fire, poking the smoldering logs into a blaze so that he would not have to look in my direction. This was the only home I had ever known, yet now I was an intruder.

THE radio commentator's voice rang clearly in that brittle silence. "In political circles it is being discussed what can be behind this open warfare

between Mayor Norwood and his son. One thing is certain: Jerry Norwood is doing more than any individual to deprive the mayor of the nomination for the governorship——"

Furiously Carrie clicked off the radio.

Ezra Rice chuckled without mirth. "You can't shut out the truth, Carrie. Thank God I haven't a son who is sticking a dagger into my back."

"You ought to know about daggers," I said. "I mean real ones as well. Like this." And I took the dagger out of my pocket.

None of their faces showed anything but puzzled interest.

I said: "It was thrown at me as I entered the house. It missed me by a hair."

Carrie gasped, but my eyes were on Dad. Slowly he was rising to his feet, staring with strange fixedness at the dagger on my palm.

He knows, I thought. Something, anyway, if no more than that Ezra Rice would like to see me dead.

Then Ezra Rice laughed derisively. "That toy!" he turned to Dad. "Your boy thinks he's smart, George. In tomorrow's *Post* you'll read how you attempted to murder him. Would any sane man use that toy for a weapon?"

I could see Dad's doubts melt away under Ezra Rice's reasoning. That thin, two-inch blade was, of course, a toy, and suddenly the dagger embarrassed me.

"It was a warning then," I said. "If Andy Weems was pushed out of a window, why shouldn't something happen to me?"

Dad's eyes darted up quickly, searching my face. Was he wondering how much I knew about the murder?

"Weems jumped," Kerby Rice said. "His corruption was on his conscience and he jumped. The five people burned in that fire were driving him mad. He admitted as much to the mayor. Didn't he, George?"

Dad nodded abstractedly, as if he hadn't really heard Kerby. He was as tired as any man I'd ever seen. Yet he wanted to be governor. The poison was too deep in him.

And then Carrie dropped her act. She took Kerby's hand and said: "Haven't you done enough to us, Jerry?"

I felt myself shake all over. I heard myself say without wanting to say it: "Not nearly as much as Dad has done to the citizens who elected him and trust him."

My father recoiled as if I had struck him across the face.

Carrie gawked at me for an eternal second, and then her mouth twisted. "Get out of here, Jerry! Go back to that cheap woman of yours!"

For a moment I was bewildered. There was no woman of mine, cheap or otherwise.

"That Irma Pollack!" Carrie flung at me. "I've heard about the kind she is."

My mouth opened and closed. What could I say?

Kerby laughed. "Your plaster-saint brother can't even defend himself, Carrie."

I dropped the dagger back into my pocket and went out without a word.

In the hall, Mary was waiting for me. "Jerry, you're cruel. He's lonely. He needs you."

"He's got plenty of company," I said savagely. "Every crook in the state!"

CHAPTER II

The Dagger

AT MY desk I worked slowly and finished my copy barely ten min-

utes before deadline. My exposé was supposed to be so hot that the individual articles of the series had to be okayed by the managing editor before they went through the usual channel of city editor and copy desk. Lee Langer glanced through the pages.

"Bilge!" he snorted. "This is the rehashed paving-block story which had whiskers a year ago. I didn't kill Jones' story on the Weems murder for this." His teeth gleamed. "Don't tell me you're going easy on your old man?"

"I'm writing the truth," I said dully.

"Then get some hot truth. What's happened to your mysterious source of information? Has it run dry?"

As a matter of fact it had, almost. I said: "I've the promise of one more bang-up story, this time with documentary proof. It'll cost five hundred bucks."

Langer whistled. "Your source of information is getting greedy."

"So far it has given value received. I understand that this is something special."

He studied me. "And kill the last chance your father has to get the nomination for governor?"

I said nothing.

Langer snapped on his office communicator and told the bookkeeper to make out the check. "To cash, as usual," he said. Then he grinned up at me, showing every tooth in his mouth. "Tell her to make this one worth five hundred bucks."

I was turning to leave before I caught it. "How do you know it's a her?"

"My job here requires that I know everything." He rocked in his swivel-chair. "Of course, I could have tapped Irma Pollack myself, but you were wise to her first and I'd have assigned somebody to write the stuff up anyway. It's all for the good of the *Post*."

"For the good of the *Post*," I echoed, with my mouth crooked.

ANDREW WEEMS had been a very cautious grafter. As building commissioner he had had his hands as deep as any in the city treasury, but he had put on a convincing act as a stuffed-shirted, church-going citizen. Even the reformers believed, until the fire, that he was the exception among city officials.

Nobody knew about Irma Pollack, either during his life or after his death. He was careful enough to make her legally his wife, but her background was not the kind for the spouse of a politically ambitious man, so he kept her under wraps. I had been lucky enough to stumble across the marriage record in a nearby state while looking for something else, and found Irma Pollack broke and willing to pick up a little side dough. Weems had made her the confident of his sins and those of his accomplices, and she had a good memory.

Irma Pollack lived alone in a charming cottage in the suburbs. As always, I arrived after midnight and parked my car several blocks away and slipped across the opposite side of the block to the back door.

She was waiting for me in a slinky dressing gown—an artificial blonde who lived hard and showed it around her eyes and mouth. Tonight she was scared. "This is the last time, Jerry. If Ezra Rice, or any of them, should find out——"

"He knows I've been coming here," I told her.

In a single second she showed her true age. "Oh, God! Are you sure?"

"Probably he thinks I came here for pleasure. At least that's what he told my sister. You said nobody knows you were Andrew Weems' wife."

She turned to a cabinet and turned out a bottle and two glasses. "There's not much Ezra Weems and that boy of his, Kerby, don't find out. If they suspect the real reason you're coming here ——" She shivered.

"All they'd do is pay you more than I can," I said. "That would be cheapest. But they don't know or they'd have made a move before this." I hesitated, then decided that as she'd been square with me, I would be with her. "My managing editor, Lee Langer, also knows."

"Does he?" She didn't seem at all worried about Langer, and that was easy to understand. "This is the last time," she insisted.

My answer was to take out the check and place it on the table. She looked at the amount greedily and lost some of her nervousness.

"Okay, Jerry. But you cash it like the other times and send me the cash."

"After you tell me."

She patted my cheek. "You know, Jerry, you're the only guy I ever trusted in my life. Maybe because you never made a pass at me." She turned to the cabinet to hunt for a corkscrew. "God knows why you do this. You won't like what I'll tell you."

"That's my business," I said.

She found the corkscrew and started to twist it into the cork. "Andrew was murdered and I know why."

"So does everybody."

"They think they know." She hunched over the bottle, carefully not looking at me. "The rumor is that Andrew had a conscience and blamed himself for the five people who were burned. That's a laugh. Andrew had a conscience like Hitler. The truth is that he was broke. He'd been playing the stock market and he needed margin in a hurry. He couldn't borrow any more, so he tried the mayor. It was a form of blackmail for five grand. Andrew said, fork up or I spill my guts. He knew he could pull that only on the mayor, who they say is honest himself. But the mayor told him to go to hell. That's when he phoned the *Post*. He was so sore and desperate he was going to make good his blackmail threat. And a little while after that he was murdered."

LIMPLY I dropped into a chair and watched her uncork the bottle. There was more to the story of Weems' murder than even Langer suspected. The implication was plain. My father was the one who had known of Weems' intentions; he had known what Weems' talking would do to him along with the others. And he had been very close to Weems' building a few minutes after the murder. Added together, the answer was almost as bad as could be.

"You have proof?" I asked hollowly.

She dipped a hand into her bosom and brought out a sheet of paper.

"Andrew was afraid he mightn't get away with it. He gave me this the night before he died to make public if anything happened to him."

"But you didn't use it."

"I was afraid of Ezra Rice," she said. "After Andrew died, I didn't come forward and say I was Mrs. Weems because Rice might get the notion that Andrew talked too much to me. Anyway, like I told you, Andrew was broke and there was no dough to claim by being his wife. Now this way, with nobody knowing how you got this paper, I'll be safe in giving it to you."

I read the paper. I had seen Andrew Weems' handwriting and this was it. The couple of hundred words were dynamite. They weren't proof that Dad had actually murdered him, but they showed that Dad knew, at the very least, what Weems was up to. No-

body but the mayor was mentioned because, as far as Weems had been concerned at the time, it was the mayor only from whom he was trying to get the blackmail money.

This would do more than keep Dad from the governorship. It would blast him to bits as mayor.

Well, wasn't that what I had been trying to do all along? No, I'd been attacking the crooks in the administration, not even mentioning the mayor. And this paper would make my father the scapegoat without touching any of the others. It seemed to make the murder a strictly personal affair between the mayor and Weems.

Slowly I tore up the paper.

Irma started to protest, then shrugged. "That's all right by me. You're paying for it."

I stood up and took the check from the table and tore it also. Irma yelled and grabbed my arm.

"What's the idea? That dough is mine."

"You'll get it," I said. "The *Post* isn't buying it. I am."

I piled the bits of paper into an ashtray and burned them. Irma watched me narrowly. When I sat down to write out my personal check to her for five hundred dollars, her painted mouth smiled.

"I get it," she said. "You're saving your old man's skin. Well, why not? You're his son and I'm after the dough. Let's have a drink on it."

She filled two six-ounce glasses with rye and handed one to me. I'm not much of a drinker, but I needed a drink badly then. She raised her glass. "To crime," she said, and we both drank.

There was too much in that one dose for me. I spluttered and put down the half-empty glass. The rye traveled two directions, up to my head and down to my legs. I reeled and grabbed the edge of the table and could not hold on. And suddenly I knew that it was not the rye that was doing this to me.

"Damn you!" I said thickly. "You doped the drink!"

On the other side of the table she stared at me in horror. Her face started to dip. I thought it was an illusion caused by my own crumpling, and then I realized that she also was sinking to the floor. Her face was level with the table top, and it was a contorted mask blown out of all proportion.

I was on the floor then, and all of the room blurred and went dark.

SOMEBODY dashed cold water across my face. It trickled into my coat collar and down my chest and armpits. My eyes opened and Dad's face hovered anxiously above my own.

"Are you all right, son?"

Nausea churned my stomach, and suddenly I remembered. I had passed out in Irma Pollack's house. Somehow I had left the place without being aware of it. Where was I now?

I sat up, closing my eyes against a spurt of pain. "Easy," Dad said, and helped me to my feet.

Heavily I leaned against him. I was still in the living room of Irma's cottage. That wasn't surprising, but Dad's presence was.

"What are you doing here?" I said.

His voice was strangely low and unsteady. "After you left, I thought over your suggestion that we have a talk. After all, you're my son. You weren't at your office or in your hotel. I heard that you — ah — visited this woman, Irma Pollack, so I came here."

"Where's Irma?"

Dad drew in his breath. "Right here where you left her."

I looked around and didn't see her. I said, "Where is she?" and then my voice choked in my throat. My eyes

had dropped to the floor. Jutting out past one of the table legs was a human leg with a velvet mule hanging at a weird angle from the bare toes.

I went around the table and there she was. She was lying on her back with her arms outflung and her eyes staring at the ceiling. Her head was thrown back, exposing the white column of her throat. Protruding from the flesh was the handle of the dagger which had been in my pocket.

Only a toy, Ezra Rice had called it. But the slender, short blade had been long enough to reach her jugular vein.

"You shouldn't have done it," Dad said quietly.

"But I——" I was looking at the top of the table and it was all wrong.

The glasses on it were smaller than the two out of which Irma and I had drunk, and the bottle was a different brand of rye and almost empty where the other had been practically full. The check I had made out to Irma was gone.

"Did you move anything from the table, Dad?"

"Nothing. I'm here only a few minutes."

I put the palms of my head against my throbbing temples. I had to think, and it was not easy. "Dad, what do you think happened?"

He looked away from me. "Isn't it obvious? You and that woman were drinking heavily. For some reason you murdered her. From what I've heard of her reputation, I imagine it was a jealous fit. Then, because of all you had had to drink, you passed out."

THAT was the pattern. That was what the police were meant to believe. The check had been removed because it wouldn't have seemed likely that I would give five hundred dollars to a woman I intended to murder within a few minutes.

"Listen!" I said. "The rye we both drank was drugged. When we both passed out, the murderer came in and took the dagger out of my pocket and stuck it into Irma's throat. Then he removed the drugged liquor and the glasses and substituted these others."

Dad's eyes didn't believe me. "It won't convince the police. She was known to be your woman."

"But she wasn't. I was paying her for information for my exposé. She was Andrew Weems' wife. Tonight she sold me proof that Weems tried to blackmail you the day before he was murdered."

"Proof?" He seemed to sag on his feet. "What kind of proof?"

"A statement in his handwriting. I paid her for it out of my own money and then burned it. Dad, who murdered Weems?"

Heavily he said: "He committed suicide. His dishonesty caused five deaths and he couldn't face it. I don't believe that this woman was Meems' wife. You tried to find fault with your father's morals. Your own were hardly exemplary. And now . . . murder."

The wall was between us, and neither could cross over to the other side.

Bitterly I said: "All right, call your cops. Do your bit to hang me."

My father's face was like something hacked out of stone as he squatted down beside the dead woman and pulled the dagger out of her throat. There was blood on the tiny blade.

"Four people saw you with this dagger," he said tonelessly. Carefully he wrapped it in his handkerchief and dropped it into his pocket.

"Four people saw me with it," I echoed in a whisper. "You and Carrie don't count, which leaves Ezra and Kerby Rice. Ezra Rice knew I was seeing Irma and probably suspected why. He decided to get rid of both of us at one stroke."

"No," Dad said. "Both Ezra and Kerby are at an executive committee meeting of the Party tonight. I was supposed to be there, but I begged off in order to find you. A few minutes before I entered this house, I phoned the meeting from a public booth. Ezra and Kerby were still there and had been since ten o'clock."

The drug was still in me, making my head spin. I couldn't think straight.

Dad said wearily: "Go now, son. Nobody need know you were here."

"What about you?"

"I'll leave in a few minutes. We'll be more easily observed if we leave together."

He was right—it was the only way. Let the police find me here and all the mayor's influence wouldn't help me. The frame-up was too neat. The only way to lick it was to squirm out of it before it was too late.

"Thanks, Dad," I said.

He didn't answer. His face was set in granite as he watched me leave.

TWENTY minutes later my car pulled up in front of the Party clubhouse. Although it was after two in the morning, the executive committee meeting had only just ended. Along with a number of other reporters, I circulated among the committee members, asking questions. It had been an extremely turbulent meeting, we learned, because the downstate portion of the Party was becoming restive under Ezra Rice's rule. Rice, as chairman of the committee, had presided.

No, there had been too much heat during the meeting for Ezra Rice to have left his chair for a single minute during the four hours. Yes, his son Kerby, who had acted as secretary, had sat at his table throughout the entire period.

Slowly I left the building. That was that. Neither of the Rices could have taken the thirty or forty minutes necessary to go to Irma Pollack's cottage and back. A killer might have been hired, but would Ezra Rice lay himself open to a squealer or possible blackmail? This was the kind of job that had to be done in person.

I got into my car but did not start the motor. Suppose Dad had found out that Irma Pollack had that statement? He had stopped Andrew Weems and he had to stop her. He couldn't go as far as to frame his own son, but he had gone through the motions and then destroyed the evidence to make me grateful to him, to hold it as a club over me, if necessary, to stop my muckraking.

Was that why he had put the dagger into his own pocket instead of giving it to me to get rid of? Had he insisted on staying after I left because he hadn't had time to dispose of the bottle of doped rye and the glasses?

Dad had been bitten by the political bug and the poison was in him. Would he stop at anything to become governor of the state?

I stepped on the starter and drove home.

CHAPTER III

The Trap

IT WAS still dark out when the ringing of the telephone awoke me.

"Jerry," Lee Langer's voice said, "Irma Weems was found murdered in her cottage."

I glanced at my watch. It was not yet five o'clock. How had the body been discovered so soon?

"Were you there tonight, Jerry?" Langer asked grimly.

"Before twelve. She was all right when I left. She said she was scared of Ezra Rice. As a matter of fact, Rice

knew I was seeing her. Now it seems that he knew why."

"Is that the way you figure it?" His voice was skeptical. What he was thinking was obvious. "I've got Mort Jones there covering the murder angle. You'd want to be there to cover the political tie-in, if any."

"Yes," I said. "I want to be there."

For the first time since I had been visiting that cottage, I drove right up to the front door. The street was jammed with prowl cars and official cars and reporters' cars. This murder of an apparently obscure woman seemed to have gotten everybody out.

The body, I learned from Mort Jones, had been found shortly after two o'clock. Langer hadn't called me until he had learned of the possible political implications. And the same thing had roused a number of big-shot political officials from their beds. When I entered the living room, I saw, in addition to Police Commissioner Hagen and Chief of Detectives Manners, Ezra Rice, the mayor, the president of the City Council, and such. They stood about grimly and uncomfortably, trying to hide the fact that they were worried.

Dad looked up at me and nodded, frozen-faced, then turned toward nobody in particular. In the room full of men, he seemed to be utterly alone.

The body had been removed to the bedroom. A couple of minutes after I arrived, Medical Examiner Atkins strode briskly into the living room.

"Obviously she was drunk," Atkins reported. "How drunk the complete autopsy will tell. She was stabbed through the throat, piercing the jugular vein. Preliminary examination reveals that the weapon had an unusually narrow blade—something, perhaps, like a flat and sharpened needle. Curiously, the blade was injected only far enough to reach the jugular. I wonder why the murderer stopped there instead of plunging the weapon all the way in, as would be natural at such a moment of passion. Of course, there is the possibility that the blade was no longer . . ."

Ezra Rice's thin body swiveled slowly and his eyes lay flatly on me.

He remembers the dagger, I thought. But what can he prove?

Police Commissioner Hagen moved so suddenly that everybody looked at him. For a breathless moment I thought he was headed toward me, but he turned aside and stuck a hand into Dad's coat pocket.

Sound ceased in the room. My father's face went ashen as Hagen's hand came out with the bunched-up handkerchief.

He didn't get rid of it, I thought hollowly. The dagger is still in that handkerchief.

Dad said nothing. He looked like a man who was dead on his feet.

HAGEN turned with the handkerchief in his hand and lifted one corner. His back blocked out, from the others in the room, sight of what was in the handkerchief. Eagerly the reporters started to press forward. Hagen said something to Manners, and seconds later, we reporters were being cleared out of the house. Our protests did no good. The cops shouldered us out to the sidewalk.

The reporters' voices were a tumult of questions swirling around me. They knew that something big had happened, but didn't know what. I stood among them, wordless and sick with terror.

Minutes later the cottage door flew open and cops brushed us aside to clear a path toward an official car. Dad moved in their wake, walking between Hagen and Manners. He looked at

me as he passed, but I don't think he saw me. The three got into the car and drove away.

By the time I reached my own car, it was too late to follow. For the next couple of hours I went wild trying to find out where Dad had gone or had been taken. I tried the municipal hall, the municipal building, finally the county jail, but I couldn't find out a thing. Obviously there were orders not to give information.

If news would come out, the best place to get it was in a newspaper office. The last edition of the *Post* had long ago appeared on the streets and the city room was practically deserted. I hung around the wire room, waiting for something to come over the tape. There was plenty about the murder, but nothing that I wanted to know.

Presently I slumped down at my desk with my head on my arms. I must have slept, for the next thing I knew I was being shaken. My sister Carrie was standing over me. She looked as if she had just seen a ghost.

"Jerry," she said, "they've arrested Father for murder."

So there it was. I stared dumbly up at her.

"Don't you hear me, Jerry. Father phoned me from Headquarters to get him a lawyer. He wants Sam Arnold."

"Arnold is a good man," I muttered.

"Jerry, it's insane. We've got to do something."

Mort Jones had come into the city room. He dropped his eyes when he saw me looking at him. I beckoned to him and reluctantly he came over.

"I heard about my father," I told him. "Have you any dope?"

Glumly Jones nodded. "There was a dagger wrapped in the handkerchief Commissioner Hagen pulled out of Mayor Norwood's pocket. It had a very slender, very short blade which just fits the wound in Irma Pollack's throat. There was blood on the blade. They're also charging him with having murdered Andrew Weems."

"Thanks, Mort," I said dully.

He went to his desk at the other end of the city room and twirled paper into his typewriter. I knew that Carrie was staring down at me in horror. I couldn't meet her eyes.

"That dagger!" she whispered. "Is that the one you had last night?"

I stood up and put a hand on her shoulder. "Leave this to me, Sis."

"What does it mean? Pa couldn't murder anybody. And you had the dagger."

"Please, Sis!" I said. "Let me work this out."

"For him or against him?"

I looked at her, and with a sob she slumped against me.

"I'm sorry, Jerry. I didn't mean what I said. I know you'll do all you can for him."

But what can I do? I thought. Ezra Rice has discarded him. And if I tell the truth, Dad will be an accessory after the fact.

"I had Kerby on the phone," Carrie was saying. "He refused to help. He said he couldn't marry the daughter of a mur——" Her voice broke.

I felt my jaw muscles harden. "I'll get Dad out," I promised her.

I GOT in to see Police Commissioner Hagen with so little trouble that I was sure he was expecting me. He was one of Ezra Rice's favorite boys and about the worst of many bad appointments. He was fat and incompetent and a bad actor. When I entered, he failed in his attempt to look solemn.

"It's tough," he sighed. "Of course, the mayor is the man who gave me my job, but I am sworn to do my duty."

With an effort I fought down the urge to ram his hypocritical words down his throat. I was here for information and not to start a row.

"What does my father say?" I asked.

"Not a word. That's the funny part. He won't explain that dagger in his pocket, or anything. Won't even tell where it came from."

Which meant that neither Ezra nor Kerby Rice had told that it had been in my possession earlier last night. And they probably wouldn't. I was small-fry. They were after the mayor now, for a reason I couldn't understand.

"You really haven't anything," I said. "That dagger by itself isn't proof. He might have picked it up."

Hagen bit at the bait. "We have motive. There is good reason to believe that the mayor murdered Weems."

"The official verdict was that Weems jumped or fell," I reminded him dryly.

Hagen shrugged. "You know how it is. We knew that Weems tried to hold up the mayor for five grand or he'd blacken his administration. We knew that the mayor turned him down and then Weems got in touch with the *Post*. We learned from the elevator operator in Weems' building that the mayor had gone up a few minutes before Weems landed on the sidewalk. The mayor walked down the steps, so he can't prove what time he left, but he was seen a block away only a couple of minutes after Weems' death."

The case against Dad was getting stronger every time I heard it. Now an elevator operator placed him in the building itself. .

"Yes, we knew all that then," Hagen was saying, "but we were all the mayor's friends and maybe tried hard to forget a few things. Then, when he up and murdered Weems' wife——"

"When did you learn that Irma Pollack was Weems' wife?"

"Now, that's a funny thing. Nobody ever suspected that a stuffed-shirt like Weems would marry a woman like Irma Pollack. What happened was that last night an anonymous phone call came into Headquarters. The voice said that Irma Pollack had been murdered in her house and that she was really Mrs. Weems."

"Did the voice also tell you to look into my father's pockets?" I asked.

"Sure thing. The second call came when we were all in the house. It was for me, and that's just what the voice told me. The whole thing makes sense. Weems tried to blackmail the mayor and the mayor killed him. Mrs. Weems probably had the same dope and tried to use it the same way, so the mayor killed her too."

In spite of the case Hagen was trying to make out, a load dropped from my chest. One thing was certain: Dad hadn't murdered Irma Pollack. He would hardly have phoned in the tip implicating himself. But there was also the murder of Andrew Weems.

"Where did the anonymous voice get its information?" I said.

Hagen shrugged. "We get a lot of tips that pan out. Why worry about where they come from if they give the facts?"

"You don't want facts," I said. "You want to crucify my father."

Commissioner Hagen didn't take offense. "Naturally you're upset. I'd be, too, if my old man was in such a jam. Would you like to see him?"

THE mayor might be charged with murder, but he still got plenty of respect from the prison officials. We were given the best reception room in the jail for my visit.

I expected him to look old and broken, but instead he came in springily and his fine eyes flashed fire. He took my hand firmly.

"I'm sorry, Dad," I muttered. "If I hadn't started that muckraking in the *Post*——"

"You were right," he cut in. "Absolutely right. I realized that yesterday after you left. My own son showing me the road to decency! I told Ezra Rice as much and we had a terrific argument. I said that in the morning I would publicly repudiate him and expose him and every dishonest official in the city, even if it meant my political suicide. He called me a fool and went to the Party meeting. I was due there also, but instead I went to look for you."

"He had to stop you before morning," I said slowly.

"And they were afraid of Irma Pollack also and killed her. By 'they' I mean Ezra and his son. Their plan was to frame you for the murder and threaten to give you up unless I behaved."

"No," I said. "That's the part that doesn't jibe. Neither Ezra nor Kerby left the meeting."

"Are you sure, son?"

"Positive. They might have hired a professional killer——"

"No, no!" Dad said. "Ezra wouldn't lay himself wide open. He always believes in doing a nasty job himself so that nobody can hold a club over him. Like murdering Andrew Weems."

I felt myself relax inwardly. Dad wouldn't lie to me now. "So Ezra Rice pushed Weems out of the window!" I murmured.

Dad went to a window and looked out. "Weems tried to blackmail me. I told him to go to hell, but I was frightened. He could cause a lot of damage. I phoned Ezra and told him and Ezra said he would take care of Weems. They have now bribed or intimidated an elevator operator to swear he had taken me up to Weems' office. That is a lie, but it will be hard for me to prove. I was walking home for lunch and passed within a block of the building at the time. When I returned to my office and learned that Weems was dead, I phoned Ezra again. He said with a chuckle: 'I told you I would take care of him.' Naturally I was extremely upset, but also more frightened than before."

"You couldn't have proved anything, anyway." I was all the way on Dad's side now.

"The point is, I wouldn't have used proof if I had it," Dad said to the window. "I knew things were going on around me but I deliberately shut my eyes. Although I never took a dishonest cent in my life."

"I know, Dad."

"No you don't!" He swung from the window and faced me squarely. "I'm as much of a crook as any of them because I permitted it. I wanted to continue to be mayor or else to become governor. I was a fool."

THERE was a silence. I studied my knuckles.

"Always a fool," he went on bitterly. "I left that dagger in my pocket. A dagger isn't easy to dispose of so that it will never be found. I was confused and uncertain by what had happened, and I was called back to that house too quickly by the discovery of the body. I did not dream that the pockets of the mayor would be searched."

"The murderer saw you put the knife in your pocket," I said. "He was watching all along, from outside or in the house itself, to make sure the murder frame stuck."

Dad started pacing the room, muttering, "But if it was neither of the Rices——" He stopped. "Did you tell the police anything at all?"

"No. Anything I say will make you an accessory. We've got to work out a

harmless explanation of how the dagger came to be in your pocket. Then I'll take the rap and you——"

His voice lashed out fiercely. "Use your head, son! Ezra and Kerby know you had that dagger. They know you've been visiting Irma Pollack at night. But they haven't said anything about it. They don't give a hang about you; if you didn't do the muckraking, the *Post* would set another reporter to doing it. It's I they have to shut up. As mayor and leading candidate for governor, anything I said would have carried great weight. But I'm not mayor now, except in name. I'm merely a man accused of murder, and any charges I make from my cell will be put down as the ravings of a sorehead."

"But if I take the rap and you get out——"

"They'll never let me out. They'll throw us both in jail, one of us as the murderer and the other as accessory."

"In other words, you think we're licked?"

He didn't look like a man who was licked. His eyes glowed with a light I had seldom seen in them. He looked eager and almost happy. He came over to my chair.

"Who said anything like that, son? I may be a fool, but I'm not a complete idiot. When Weems was killed, I realized for the first time how utterly ruthless Ezra Rice was. I took steps to protect myself. Over the months I have accumulated documentary evidence incriminating every out-and-out crook in the administration, especially Ezra and Kerby Rice. A mayor, whom they need for their crooked work and think is a perfect dupe, can gather such evidence easily."

I caught his fire. "You have it in a safe place?"

"Safe enough. Do you remember the stamps you collected as a kid and haven't looked at in fifteen years? That's where the stuff is. You're a newspaperman with the columns of the press open to you. Those documents aren't the vague and petty charges you made in your paper. They're absolute proof of crimes in black and white—suppressed police statements, proof of bribery, juggling of city funds, use of city equipment for private construction, and so on."

"But none of that will clear you of this murder charge," I pointed out.

"Never mind that. The important thing is to pull the whole rotten structure about their ears."

He was a different man now, or had again become the kind of man he had been when I was a kid. I was very proud of him

I went to the door and turned. "Dad, when I visited you last night, Ezra and Kerby Rice were in the living room with you and Carrie. Had either of the Rices left the room during the five minutes before I came in?"

He shook his head. "Neither of them could have thrown the dagger at you. Anyway, it was a very peculiar weapon. I don't understand it."

"I think I'm beginning to," I said. "Listen for the crash, Dad."

CHAPTER IV

The Killer

I STARTED for home—or rather, the house that used to be my home—and then changed my mind and went to the office instead. Those documents could keep an hour or two longer.

The city room of the *Post* was in a high state of excitement. The arrest for murder of the mayor and leading candidate for governor was the biggest local news in the history of the city. Curious glances followed my progress.

They knew I'd been attacking my father's administration, but this was different. I tried hard to keep my face impassive.

I passed my desk and moved on to the desk of Jim Arthur, our gossip columnist who knew everything and dared print only part of it. For a while I consulted him in whispers. When I left him, his lips were pale and his eyes scared.

A copy boy rushed over and said that Lee Langer wanted to see me at once. The managing editor was alone in his office, waiting for me.

"It's a hell of a note, Jerry," he said solemnly. "Naturally I'm keeping my mouth shut."

"About what?"

His voice dropped to pulpy softness. "That you were in Irma's house before or after or during the murder."

"Talk and be damned," I said. "I've nothing to hide."

His eyebrows arched. "No, of course not. Still——" He shrugged. "The publisher had me on the phone an hour ago. We're going after the mayor hammer and tongs, and the boss thinks that under the circumstances it will be embarrassing for you to stay on the *Post*. I tried to argue with him, Jerry, but even though he's my father-in-law, I got nowhere."

I said dryly: "What you really mean is that you wouldn't want one of your star reporters found guilty of murder."

"Don't say that, Jerry."

"Why argue?" I told him. "There will be plenty of other papers that will grab me up with what I have."

"More of Irma Pollack's political stuff?"

I handed him one of his own toothy grins. "Not this time."

Langer studied the top of his desk. "Let's see it, Jerry. If it's good the boss might keep you on."

I said, "You'll see it in page one spreads in a rival paper," and went out.

I FOUND the front door of my father's house partly open, so I didn't ring. I went into the library and looked through Dad's desk for the snub-nosed .32 automatic which I knew he kept there. The box of cartridges was in the drawer, but not the gun. That was strange. For years it had been there untouched.

Suddenly I thought of the open door. Mary was a crank about keeping doors not only closed but locked. Why was it open now?

"Mary?" I called.

I listened for an answer. When the house maintained its silence, I knew that I would need a gun in a hurry and wondered how I could get my hands on one.

I went up the stairs and up the hall to the room which had been mine before I left home. And there on the floor lay the old housekeeper in a pool of her own blood.

"Mary!" I cried and dropped down at her side.

She was not dead. Her breath came in agonized gasps. A ragged furrow was laid open in her temple where she had been struck. With the barrel of a gun, probably.

Had he found what he had come for? Was he still in the house with that gun ready?

I opened the closet door and took a pile of old school books from the top shelf. My stamp album was among them. It was bound in leather—a birthday gift from my mother many years before. The album was bulkier than it should have been. I removed the cover and there, between it and the hard-board cover of the album, was a sheaf of papers.

"So that's where you kept it?" a dry

voice said. "The trouble was, I hadn't any idea where to look."

Kerby Rice, tall and athletic and tight-lipped, stepped into the room. His right hand held a big revolver. There was a fleck of red on the muzzle where it had raked Mary's temple.

Wearily I said: "You and your father think of everything. Of course there was a dictaphone in that jail room. You listened to my father and me talking, and you rushed here to get the papers. Mary heard you and came upon you searching my room, and you knocked her out."

"You came back too soon, Jerry." Kerby's gaze was fixed with frantic hunger on the papers in my hand. "Let's have them."

I didn't move.

"Those papers, Jerry," he repeated tightly, and his gun shifted toward my heart.

Then we heard somebody coming up the stairs. Carrie?

"Watch out, Sis!" I yelled. "Kerby has a gun."

KERBY didn't turn. His lips were drawn back over his teeth, and he continued to watch me narrowly. The steps were moving up the hall now. There was more than one pair of feet.

And then Carrie appeared in the doorway. She entered the room with stiff, mechanical steps, and her face wore an expression of dead hopelessness.

Ezra Rice was behind her, and he had Dad's little automatic lined on her back. Kerby turned his head then for a moment. When he looked back at me, his face was suddenly haggard. Carrie, after all, was the woman he had intended to marry.

"She was sneaking about outside, looking through the windows," Ezra said heavily. "She must have thought you were still downstairs, and she had that gun, and perhaps she was going to shoot you from a window if she could. It's lucky I came with you, Kerby. I slipped up behind her and took the gun from her."

"I should have shot you when I had a chance," Carrie's voice lashed at Kerby. "I saw you searching in the downstairs rooms, but I didn't know for what." She lifted her eyes to me. "What is it they want, Jerry?"

I shook the papers in my hand. "These will send them and other crooks to jail. Last night Dad told them he had such papers, and so they framed him."

Ezra Rice shook his head. "We didn't frame him. Obviously you or he murdered Irma Pollack. And now——" The muscles of his gaunt face hardened. "We can't let them live, Kerby."

Carrie cried hoarsely: "Kerby, you can't kill us!"

Kerby roused himself as from a dream. "You know too much," he mumbled. "It's you two or us."

And it had to be us. Kerby probably had never loved Carrie; it had merely been a good political match. Still, he must have been fond of her, yet not nearly as fond as of his own skin. We knew too much. We had seen too much.

For moments the only sound was the sharp breathing of Carrie. Then Kerby said hollowly: "Give me that gun, Dad. I'll take care of this. The maid is still unconscious. She didn't see who struck her; she won't know anything. The idea is that it will be a double suicide. They couldn't stand the disgrace of their father being a murderer and took their own lives with his gun." His voice thinned shrilly. "Beat it, Dad!"

Slowly Ezra Rice nodded and handed the automatic to Kerby and then went out. We heard his dragging feet in the hall. Neither of them liked this at all,

but that alone would not stop them. I suppose once you get in deep enough, you have to do a lot of things you don't like.

Carrie was utterly silent now. She stood very straight, looking at Kerby, and Kerby would not meet her eyes. He dropped his own revolver into his pocket. He tilted the automatic up to my chest.

AND all at once he was stumbling. Gripped by unendurable tension, none of us had noticed Mary had recovered consciousness. We did not see her grab Kerby's ankle.

Frantically Kerby kicked at her with his free foot. His toe caught the wound in her temple. She sank back to the floor; her hold on him loosened. But by that time I was on him and drove an uppercut into his jaw. He was off balance anyway, and my blow dropped him to the floor.

I fell on him and hit him again. His head lolled; his eyes glazed. He had forgotten about the gun, or he had no coordination to make use of it. I tore it out of his fingers.

Feet pounded in the hall. Ezra Rice was back. In the doorway he stopped dead, gawking down into the muzzle of the automatic in my hand.

Carrie uttered a long-drawn sigh and knelt beside Mary. The housekeeper was unconscious again, but she had done her job.

Kerby was recovering, sitting up and rubbing his jaw. I took his revolver from his pocket and handed Dad's automatic to Carrie.

"Use it if you have to, Sis," I told her grimly. "We're all going downstairs, except Mary. I'll phone an ambulance for her and the police for you two."

There was no talk at all as we went down to the library. Carrie stood against the wall, with the automatic against her hip, as I phoned for an ambulance. I was about to make the second call when Ezra Rice spoke huskily.

"There is nothing in those papers that will get off your father."

He was right, of course. Whatever happened to the crooked politicians, Dad would remain a murderer in the eyes of the law.

"Listen to me, Jerry," Ezra Rice went on urgently. "We can make a deal. In return for those papers, I'll give you my word that I will have the indictment against the mayor squashed."

"Your word!" I snorted.

"Jerry, wait!" Carrie said. "We can hold onto the papers until Father is free. After all, his safety is all that counts."

I stood at the table with my hand on the phone and bit my lower lip. They were all watching me in breathless suspense.

"He wouldn't want it that way," I said: "He gave me a job to do, and I'm doing it." I picked up the handset.

My left side was to Kerby, and he banked on the fact that Carrie, who once had loved him, could not bring herself to shoot him down. And he was desperate enough to try to stop me from using that phone at all costs. So he threw himself at me.

I dropped the phone and spun toward him, but I would not have had time to use the revolver. His shoulder touched mine when thunder rocked the library. Abruptly he fell away from me to the floor.

Carrie shot him, I thought. And then there was a second shot, and fire cut a track along my ribs.

For a single bewildered moment I did not get it. Carrie had not moved, nor had the position of her gun.

"The window!" Carrie gasped.

It clicked then, all of it. One window in the room was open a couple of inches from the bottom, and without

taking time for thought I threw a hurried shot at it. The pane shattered. I raced across the room and stuck my head out between the shards of windowpane.

It was a reckless thing to do, but luckily my shot had frightened him off. If it had been night, he might have gotten away in the darkness; but it was still afternoon and there was nothing on that side of the house but a smooth stretch of lawn. He was no more than twenty feet away, running for his life.

Deliberately, in cold fury, I shot at his back. I shot again and again until he went down and lay still in the grass. Then I opened the window and dropped out.

He was not dead, but he was dying. A cop with drawn gun was running across the lawn and other people were spilling out of their houses. I waited until the ambulance I had called for Mary clanged up and then I returned to the house.

In the library Carrie was standing at the window, watching the crowd outside. Kerby still lay where he had fallen beside the table, his body twisted in a position which no live man could have held. Ezra Rice was a limp bundle of clothes deep in a chair, and his face was in his hands.

Carrie turned from the window. "Who shot Kerby?"

I could feel blood trickle from the wound in my side, but there was little pain. It could not be serious.

"Lee Langer," I said. "Both bullets were meant for me."

WITH my side taped, I was resting in Dad's favorite chair in front of the fire. Carrie was curled up on the couch, and Dad, as usual, was poking the smoldering logs.

"Kerby's death made Ezra Rice go to pieces," Pa said. "He blames himself for what happened to his son, and of course he's right. He admitted murdering Andrew Weems. He admitted many other crimes I had never suspected." His voice hardened with self-recrimination. "I was the perfect dupe."

Carrie set fire to a cigarette. "What about Ira Pollack and Lee Langer?"

"It's the old story," I said. "Irma married Andrew Weems because he looked like an easy living. When he died broke, she had trouble making ends meet. One way was to sell me political dirt. The other was to blackmail Langer.

"She had letters and she was making Langer pay through the nose. He had become managing editor of the paper through marrying the publisher's daughter. He liked his job and family, and Irma could deprive him of both. So he paid, but Irma was too greedy, and he determined to get rid of her. To simply kill her was too dangerous. He hadn't been too careful and certain people knew of his past, which would lead the police to suspect him first of all. So he had to have a fall-guy, and I was elected.

"This morning I realized that it had to be a personal murder. Both Ezra and Kerby Rice were out as the actual murderers, and neither of them could have thrown the dagger. Anyway, it was a lot safer for them or any other politician to buy her off than kill her. Secondly, they would have done something about it before she'd sold me nearly all her dope. And the dagger was not a murder weapon—certainly not for throwing. It was thrown to get it into my possession. Under the circumstances it was curious enough for me to keep and probably to show it to people who would identify it after the murder.

"It had to be somebody, then, who was aware that I was seeing her. Lee

Langer was one of the very few people who knew. Knowing how Irma would sell anything for money, the idea appealed to me. I learned the truth from Jim Arthur. The pattern fell into place. Langer, having just given me the check, knew I was bound there. The bottle had been drugged. When Irma and I were knocked out by the rye, Langer had only to remove the dagger from my pocket and use it.

"The idea was to have the police find me there while I was still unconscious. But Dad came in and revived me. Langer saw that. What happened changed his scapegoat, but nothing else. He thought he was sitting pretty until I hinted that I had received non-political dirt from Irma. From Jim Arthur he learned that I had questioned him about Irma's boy friends and that Jim had told him that he, Langer, was one of them. He must have got the notion then that Irma had sold me the letters. He was scared stiff and got a gun and——"

My dad turned from the fire. "Didn't you guess that he would do that?"

"I wanted him too," I said. "How else could I pin the murder on him? I hoped to be ready for him, but Ezra and Kerby Rice confused the whole thing. Langer was outside the window when we were in the library. Maybe he thought that the papers we were talking about were the letters with which Irma had been blackmailing him. More likely he saw what seemed like a perfect chance to liquidate me and have Ezra and Kerby take the rap, just as you were taking the rap, Dad, for his first murder. Anyway, he was too frantic to think much. He knew chiefly that he had to get rid of me and there was his chance.

"It wasn't an easy shot to begin with, and Langer wasn't much good with a pistol, and Kerby leaped at me just then. Kerby took the bullet. Langer shot too quickly the second time and only raked my side. He lived long enough to make a confession to the police."

Dad stood with his back to the fire and his hands clasped behind him. Gravely he said: "I've one job before I resign as mayor, and that's to clean out the rest of them."

"You will not resign!" I protested. "You'll go to the people. They'll understand. Maybe they'll still make you governor. And if you're licked at the polls, at least you'll go down with your head high."

Carrie smiled, and Dad came over and put his hand on my shoulder.

"I was waiting for you to say that, son," he said.

THE END

TWISTED FACTS

SINCE truth is often stranger than fiction, writers of crime stories for magazines as well as radio serials have often gotten their best ideas from police records of actual cases. Police departments have tried to cooperate in the belief that if the public became aware of the evils of crime, the number of persons going astray would be reduced. They were especially hopeful that this lesson—crime does not pay—would reach the youth of the nation. However, in order to make the stories more exciting, the facts were often distorted and many times the criminals ended up as heroes instead of villains.

About four years ago at a meeting of the International Association of Police Chiefs, a resolution was passed whereby all the chiefs agreed to stop the practice of giving out factual information on crime. No longer would the announcer be able to claim that the "following story is taken from the records of the police department in City X." No longer could distorted facts be passed off as truisms.

This ban has been lifted to a certain extent and programs such as "Gang Busters" still appear on the air using actual facts from police files. But these programs always portray the criminal in his true role of menace to society and the moral is always "you can't win."—*W. Lin.*

CRIME Oddities

THE GERMANS CALL IT CRIME!

By PETE BOGGS

STEINBECK'S "The Moon is Down" is one of the forbidden publications in Denmark but Danish students got it translated, mimeographed and distributed. A student was arrested in whose home some copies of it were found. The Gestapo asked, "Who wrote it and where is he?" The student told him. "You lie! He's here and you know where he is hiding. Confess, or you'll suffer for it!"

It took the student three hours to convince the Gestapo man that the author really was an American living in America, and even then the matter was reported to Berlin for further investigation.

THE Gestapo recently concentrated its attention on Danish doctors, suspecting them, not without reason, of having helped wounded and otherwise injured patriots who would have been arrested throughout the country, but the Germans seem to be discontented with this result, and people expect further investigation and persecution of the doctors. Some of these are also accused of having helped people to escape to Sweden.

"AT LAST I feel like a good Dutchman—for I have been in jail." With these words, a Hollander just released from a German prison camp, greeted his relatives and friends. "Now I am like everybody else in my neighborhood," he added.

Before the German invasion imprisonment was no less a stigma for a Hollander than for any other national. In fact, Holland had for many decades shared with Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries the distinction of having the lowest per capita crime rate in the world.

A LITTLE, far from unusual, item broadcast by the Swedish radio gives a telling glimpse. At Elsinore a Danish police officer, Larsen, was shot and seriously wounded by a German coast guard. With him was a young clerk, Leif Ohlsen. "Ohlsen, who was arrested, admitted that he had been on board a ship bound for Sweden, carrying a suitcase."

His crime sounds to a Dane as it would sound to a New Yorker that people had been shot and arrested for trying to take a ferry to Staten Island.

A NORWEGIAN clergyman, Pastor Tori, was conducting a service in his church when a congregation member suddenly left after having heard the sermon and prayers. Shortly after, he returned with a German policeman. The German walked toward the altar to arrest Pastor Tori.

On asking why he was arrested, the clergyman was told he had prayed for prisoners of war and for banished bishops and pastors. Tori admitted this, but asked if the arrest could not be postponed until the end of the service. This request was bluntly refused, and the pastor dressed in clerical robes was taken to Kongsvinger Fortress.

THE "inefficiency" of Dutch farmers has been one of the most effective means of resistance to the Germans. Now the lands, cattle stocks and property of these farmers are completely at the mercy of the Germans.

A new decree by German and Dutch German officials confiscates entire lands and cattle stocks of farmers who "neglect their duty" of delivering fixed parts of their product to the authorities. The same ruling applies to those cultivating their land or managing their stocks "inefficiently."

MONSEIGNEUR STEPINAC, Archbishop of Zagreb, preached a sermon to 20,000 people condemning the German practice of shooting innocent people. Priests circulating copies of the sermon or reading it from their pulpits were arrested by the Germans. In Dalmatia alone it is reported that 72 priests have been imprisoned for this reason.

Although the Archbishop has been repeatedly denounced by the German press, he is one of the most popular figures in Yugoslavia and has not yet been arrested.

OPEN resistance continues in Holland. Recently, Germans arrested a Dutch woman underground worker and took her to prison by train. Watching for an opportunity she jumped off the train, but was badly injured, German guards found her and took her to a hospital. There she was heavily guarded and no one was allowed to enter without a pass.

Some fellow workers managed to fake a pass and entering the hospital during visiting hours, bound and gagged the guards, and rescued the woman. All escaped safely.

Clean Slate

By H. WOLFF SALZ

ED TOLAN waited in a dark doorway across the street from the dimly lighted tavern. The brim of his gray felt hat was pulled low over his eyes and the collar of his overcoat covered the lower part of his face. His gloved hands were buried deep in the overcoat pockets. His right hand gripped a .38 automatic.

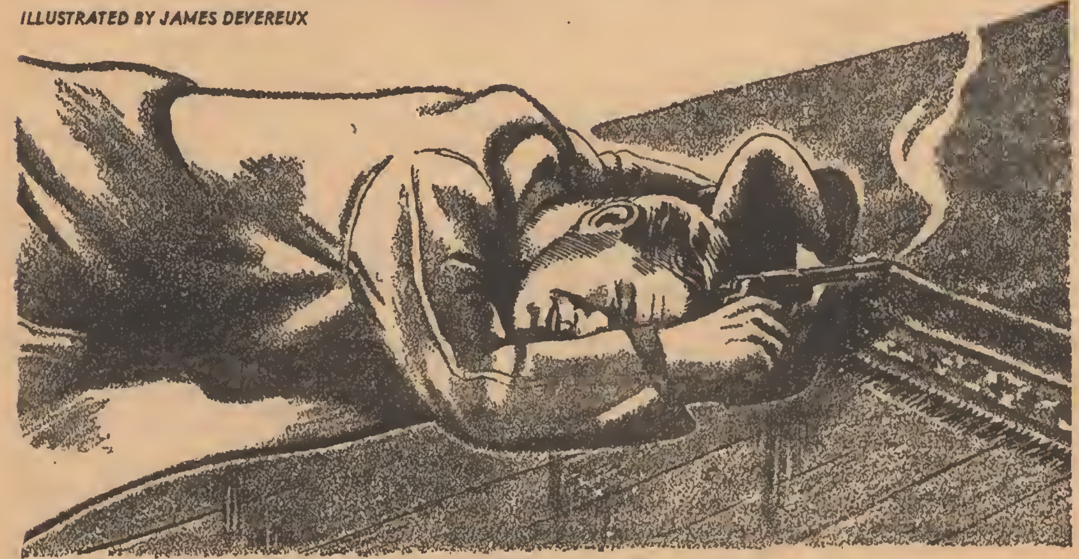
When Leroy Mannix finally emerged from the tavern, Ed straightened and his muscles tensed. There was another man with Mannix, someone he had evidently met at the bar. The other man was short and thin, a little guy who couldn't have been much over five feet tall. They talked for a moment and then separated, the little guy moving with a limp in one direction, Mannix walking briskly away in the opposite direction.

Ed crossed the street diagonally, following Mannix. He stayed ten yards behind the other's tall, lean figure. The street was deserted. The warehouses and factories on both sides were dark. Mannix was apparently absorbed in his own thoughts. He seemed unaware that he was followed.

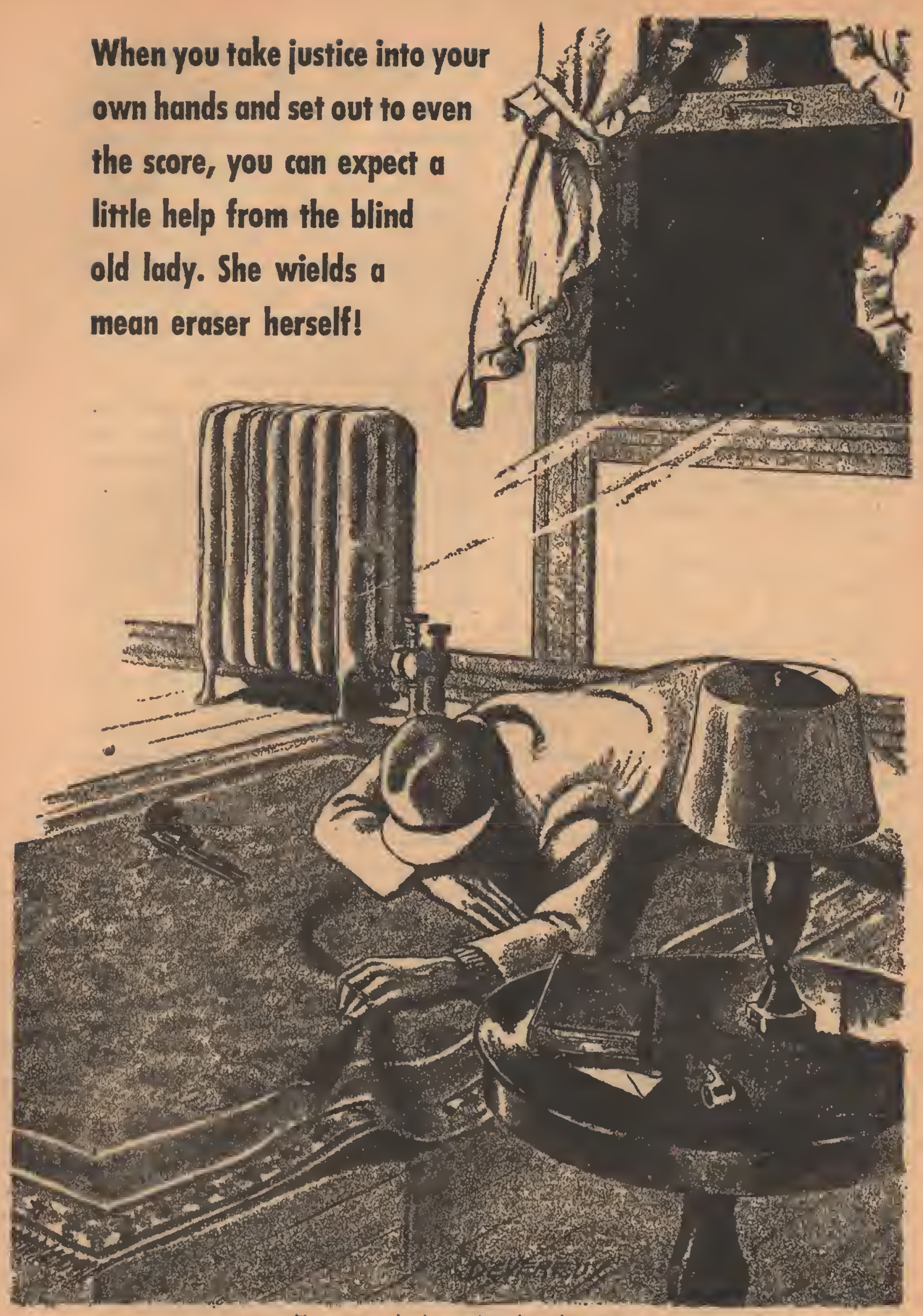
When Mannix neared the mouth of an alley, Ed quickened his pace. Mannix turned suddenly, evidently aware for the first time of the clicking footsteps behind him. His myopic eyes squinted at Ed's approaching figure uncertainly, then opened wide in astonishment as he finally recognized Ed.

"What—what are you doing around

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES DEVEREUX



When you take justice into your own hands and set out to even the score, you can expect a little help from the blind old lady. She wields a mean eraser herself!



There was only the wind rustling the curtains . . .

here, Tolan?" he blurted.

"I've been following you."

In the wan glow of a distant street light, Mannix's tired face seemed to turn gray.

"Why?" he demanded in a cracked voice.

Ed moved to within inches of Mannex. His right hand emerged part way from his pocket, enough to reveal the automatic cupped in his big, gloved hand. "Does this give you the answer?"

Mannix started violently, his eyes moving in horror from the exposed automatic to Ed's grim face. "Listen, Tolan—it won't do you any good! Killing me won't——"

"Shut up!" En snarled. "I'll do the talking!"

Mannix's eyes darted wildly up and down the dark street. His breath caught in a sob as he saw they were alone.

"I'll let Judy get the divorce!" he gasped. "Listen, you don't have to kill me! I'll let her have the divorce, Tolan!"

"It's too late now, Mannix. The last time I asked you to give Judy her freedom, you laughed at me! It's my turn to laugh! You think I'd believe what you say now, when you're facing this automatic!"

"I swear it, Tolan! Let me go and I won't stand in your way!"

"No, you won't stand in my way——"

Ed's finger released the automatic's safety catch. A moment later, a cone of orange-yellow flame spurted from the muzzle. The report in the midnight stillness was like the crack of a bull-whip. A small black circle appeared suddenly between Mannix's eyes, above the bride of his nose. He crumpled soundlessly to the sidewalk.

ED pocketed the automatic and knelt over the inert figure. Calmly he probed the dead man's pockets, found the wallet. He straightened and darted into the alley as he heard startled shouts from the doorway of the tavern halfway down the block.

Less than five minutes later, when he reached his parked car four blocks away, he paused in the darkness, extracted the few bills he found in Mannix's wallet, and tossed the empty billfold into the gutter. Probably, the cops would put the motive down as robbery. It was that kind of neighborhood.

A smile of satisfaction touched his lips as he drove away. Even if the cops didn't believe the motive had been robbery, there would still be no reason to link him with the murder. Other than Judy Mannix, there was now no one on earth beside himself who knew he and Mannix had even been acquainted.

He and Judy had been careful. Mannix would never have guessed a thing if Ed hadn't gone to his house one evening, introduced himself and flatly demanded that he let Judy divorce him. Mannix had refused to believe Judy no longer loved him, had laughed in Ed's face. Even Judy's demands had failed to move him.

Ed fought down the urge to drive straight to Judy, tell her that Mannix no longer stood in their way, to hold her in his arms, press her close. But that would have to wait. Now, more than ever, they would have to be careful.

Later, in two or three months, there would be time enough for the full ecstasy of her warm lips, and the heady fragrance of her soft blonde hair.

He was humming a lilting tune under his breath as he opened his apartment door. He shut the door, flicked the light switch. His breath caught in his throat as he stared wide-eyed at the thin little man who sat in a chair facing the door. The little man smiled, stood up. His coat was unbuttoned, exposing a

blue-striped shirt. There was a gun in his hand.

"Greetings, pal."

"Who are you?" Ed demanded in a stunned-voice.

"A pal sent me.

"You—you must be in the wrong apartment."

"Naw, you're Ed Tolan, all right. Mannix described you to a T."

"Mannix!"

"Yeah, a friend of yours. He thinks a lot if you. Thinks your life is worth as much as five C's. Can you imagine that! Five C's, cash on the barrelhead for a punk like you! Usually, I do a pushover job like this for two or three C's."

Ed's mouth was suddenly dry. His tongue felt thick, hairy. "Listen," he whispered hoarsely, "Mannix is dead!"

THE little man grinned wisely. "You'll have to dig up a better angle, pal."

"It's the truth! I swear it!"

"He must have died awful quick," the little guy retorted, still grinning, "because I just been with him not an hour ago. He told me about you—and I don't like rats like you. Me, I believe in shooting straight where dolls are concerned. Yeah, it'd almost be a pleasure to knock you off for free."

The little guy backed towards the open window. Beyond him and the softly billowing curtains, Ed could see the rail of the fire escape. He saw the tightening of the little guy's fingers around his gun.

"Wait!" Ed called hoarsely. "Don't———"

There was a red flash. Something hot tore into his chest. The room spun as Ed teetered on his heels, sank to the floor. Through a red fog of pain he saw the little guy put one foot over the window sill, sit there a moment. He saw the little guy aim his gun again, deliberately, calmly.

Somehow, Ed found his automatic in his hand. He lifted his leaden arm, slowly, with his last ebbing ounce of strength. He aimed it at the little guy's head. Through a blur, he saw the little guy's eyes widen in surprise, but only momentarily. Then there was the reverberating thunder of rapid gunfire. Ed pulled the trigger of his automatic as darkness closed over him.

The little gunman sat astride the window sill for a stunned moment. A circle of red spread slowly over his striped shirt. His head bowed forward and he stared down at the widening crimson spot on his chest with dull, unbelieving eyes. Then slowly, he tilted forward into the room again, flat on his face, and lay motionless. Above him, the organdy curtains billowed softly into the room.

THE END

JUSTICE UNDER GERMANS

"MURDER as a political weapon is severely punished when it is employed against Germans," the Stockholm *Ny Tid*, Jan. 21, states, "but when the murderers are Germans and their victim is a patriot the country's own police authorities are prevented from seizing the murderers. . . . It throws a revealing light on legal conditions in German-occupied countries."

These editorial remarks refer to news from Denmark that the German police has stopped the investigations by the Danish police into the assassination of the noted Danish pastor-playwright, Kaj Munk. The Danish police inspector in charge of the case turned in a report of 127 pages to his chief. Kaj Munk is said to have been fetched by German Gestapos who motored him to Silkeborg where he was examined. Three men belonging to the so-called Schalburg Corps (blackest of remaining Danish Germans) were ordered to bring him home again. They murdered him on the way, with or without a hint having been given them. Their leader was a Danish German from South Jutland, or Slesvig, a fanatic pro-German and member of "Schleswigsch Kameradschaft."—*Raye Marlowe.*

Die, Mr. Spraggins!

By TED STRATTON

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT FUQUA



LITTLE Elmer Spraggins stepped off the curb at Medford and Spring. He had pre-empted a daily, unnecessary task—that of flagging down the bus—and it gave him a sense of power.

The black sedan veered around the lumbering bus and hurtled down on Elmer. When he glimpsed the sedan, Elmer was too scared to move. He caught a fleeting view of a gray-hatted, long-nosed man crouched over the wheel. Then a brawny hand jerked Elmer and flung him to the sidewalk. The sedan roared past, tires whining against the flagstone curbing.

Jake Ehlers, a husky steelworker peered at the thin figure lying on the sidewalk. "Almost conked you, pal," Jake growled.

Mr. Markle, one of the commuters, sputtered angrily: "No sober man would drive like that!"

Elmer scrambled to his feet, dusted off his shiny blue suit. The commuters got on the bus. Jake warned: "Meant to kill you, he did."

"No," Elmer protested mildly, "he must have been drunk."

"Not in my book, pal. The guy was a killer."

The bus driver told Elmer: "Caught a piece of that license. RH-247-something. Wanna report him, huh?"

"No," Elmer sputtered, and hid himself at the back of the crowded bus. No, he assured himself, he didn't want anybody's license number. Nor any traffic with the police. Why once when his older daughter had broken a neighbor's

Elmer Spraggins had never harmed a fly, yet today somebody was out to kill him—and make no mistake about it! But why?



"Find something Interesting?" came a low, ominous voice

window, the police came and—Elmer shivered at the encounter.

But he did wonder what it would be like to become a hero. Like Mr. Markle up front. Mr. Markle wore glasses and was very sedate. Hadn't he hurled a can of soup at a stickup gent who'd walked into the store where Mr. Markle clerked? What if the can had smashed only a plate glass window? Hadn't Mr. Markle thwarted the stick-up and blossomed into a neighborhood hero?

"Someday," Elmer thought, "maybe I can be a hero."

He left the bus and walked two blocks to Higgins' Hardware Store. All day he delivered packages and waited on customers and listened to their eternal questions. "You're sure this paint won't fade?" Or, "Why haven't you got galvanized garbage cans?"

Each time Elmer would explain that the paint was fade-proof or your-money-back and that one garbage can would supply metal for four machine gun barrels, that's why. At six P.M. he left the store and hurried to the bus corner. While he waited, he spotted a parked sedan across the street. Something familiar about the driver's gray hat and long nose. He seemed to be watching the bus corner.

Elmer gulped. Wasn't that the very man in the same black sedan that had almost killed him this morning? Panicky, Elmer ducked behind an elderly woman just as the 6:10 bus braked at the corner. In the bus, Elmer leaned across two stout ladies and peered out the grimed window. The driver of the sedan had shifted his attention to the departing bus.

Elmer saw the license plate. The letters and figures seemed to leap at him. RH-2476-L. "6-L" completed the license that the morning bus driver had given Elmer.

One of the ladies snapped: "Get off my toes, squirt!"

"S-sorry, m-madam," Elmer gasped.

Now he was sure he was trailed by a killer. And for about the hundredth time in his life, Elmer Spraggins experienced the paralyzing sensation of terror. He kept staring out the rear window, half expecting to see the dreaded sedan. in pursuit.

AT MEDFORD and Spring, Elmer ducked off the bus and crouched behind the corner mailbox. The long street lay dark and deserted in the twilight. Elmer squared his shoulders. "Like—like Clark Gable," he assured himself and crossed the macadam and entered Medford.

In the middle of the empty block, he halted. That sedan! Thirty feet away! A man leaned big shoulders out an opened car window. Something gleamed in his hand. Elmer took three frightened steps and dove headlong over a three-foot high board fence. SPANG! A bullet splintered the fence. Elmer tried to burrow into the frozen ground.

Nearby, a door opened. Rapid steps across a wooden porch floor. A car raced off in second gear. "Just a car backfired," a man said clearly. Retreating steps, slamming door.

Very cautiously a scant inch at a time, Elmer raised his head until he could peek over the fence top. No sedan. No killer with a leveled gun. Just the blank, windy street. Elmer climbed over the fence. Two dead leaves rustled on the sidewalk at his back. Elmer fled down the walk like a man with the devil grinning over his shoulder.

Along a bungalow to the backyard, up three creaky steps, into a hot kitchen so fast that the gray-haired woman bent over the gas stove looked up and exclaimed: "Scared the wits out of me,

you did!" She eyed him sharply. "You're white as a sheet, Elmer Spraggins."

"I—I'm c-cold," Elmer chattered. "I—I ran."

His wife returned her attention to the stove. "Running at your age, taxing your heart!" Emma scolded. "And you with growing girls on your hands."

Two tow-headed girls, aged four and six, burst into the kitchen and created a diversion. Elmer managed to bolt his supper. When the little girls went upstairs with their mother, he pulled down every shade. He washed the dishes and swept the floor. Then he hid a pot of garbage in the trash basket under the sink. No, sir! Wouldn't catch him venturing into no backyard to empty garbage tonight.

He sat at the table and read the evening paper. Suddenly he shoved the chair back so violently that he toppled over backwards. Emma walked in. "Elmer," she scolded, "what you doing on the floor?"

"D-darned chair leg snapped and pitched me," he explained sheepishly. What he meant to say was that he'd sat for five minutes while the overhead bulb threw his shadow against the shade!

Emma snapped: "What you got the shades pulled down for?" Quickly she hoisted them up halfway.

"Keep 'em down," Elmer protested. "I read it in the paper that drawn shades keep out the cold."

"Nonsense." Emma picked a torn piece of paper off the floor. She walked to the trash basket, whirled angrily. "Why'd you leave the garbage pot in the basket?"

Elmer trembled. "Why—why——"

Emma thrust the pot in his trembling hand. "Outside with this."

Elmer hesitated.

"You scared of the dark, Elmer Spraggins?" Emma taunted. She gave him a good-natured push toward the door. "Run along."

GO into that backyard. Not for a million— For a fleeting moment Elmer thought of revolting. He knew it wouldn't work. On leaden feet he trudged to his death. The door opened, closed behind him. The cold air snapped at his face and hands. He shivered.

Something stirred in the darkness by the foundation. A swift, darting black shape! The killer! Oh, gracious God, Elmer prayed frantically, don't let him kill me. Not on my own doorstep.

The pot of garbage slipped from his nervous hand. It clanged violently atop the metal top of the garbage can. Elmer jumped. A scavenger cat scuttled off and whisked over the side fence into Mr. Vanowski's backyard.

Elmer was too frightened to see the scurrying cat. He bolted across the brief backyard. He didn't remember about Emma's low-hung clothes line, either. The line slapped his forehead. Elmer's feet kept running. His body flattened out and he landed with terrific force on the frozen ground.

To his terrorized mind, the backyard seemed to spout gunmen. Shots exploded every which way. Miraculously, he hadn't been killed. He scrambled up, lunged past Mr. Caesar DeWitt's garage and fled along the driveway like an Olympic sprinter. Five blocks away he collapsed from exhaustion against a shack next a lumberyard.

His lungs burned inside his chest. Arms and legs were numb. Beneath his thin cotton shirt his heart pumped like mad. A killer . . .

Elmer tried to think. There must be

some reason for a killer to trail him. Obviously a man didn't get shot at unless there was a logical cause. Who was the big man in the sedan? Where had he seen him before? On the street? A customer in the store?

Elmer checked back. Customer—big, gray hat, long nose. No, the description didn't click. Wait a second! An apartment—no, an office on—on Elmwood Avenue. Sure, that's where. Or had he? Gradually his mind recalled the incident. He'd delivered an order. The last mailbox from Higgins' store.

"Let's see. The doctor—yes, it was a doctor, but darned if he could remember the name! When the doctor had seen Elmer, he'd pulled his hat lower over his eyes. He'd hustled Elmer out of the office and waved away the change from two one-dollar bills. Something vaguely familiar about that big doctor. What was it?

There was a sure way to find out. Elmer trotted down the street, hugging the shadows, shivering in the cold. He entered a sidedoor of a drugstore on Lotus Road. The phone booth was at the back. Elmer located a nickel in his pants pocket and dialed.

A voice brogued: "Police Headquarters. Officer Clahan speaking."

"Got to get the name of a car owner, please. The license is RH-2476-L."

"Oh, and would you now? Just a minute, lad."

Elmer peeked out the booth window. He was cold. An overcoat and several white jackets hung on hooks just outside the door. Hah, if he could borrow that overcoat just to get home!

Then Clahan's voice: "Sure and would you be seeing a car with that license?"

"Yeah, I did."

"And just where?"

Elmer tensed. That was the police, always poking their noses into your business! "On—on the street," he said.

"Is that so now? Well you just wait right there and I'll send a couple of the boys——"

ELMER dropped the receiver on the hook. He had to leave. He wasn't waiting for any squad car to arrive! Cautiously he sidled from the booth. A single clerk lolled up front. A lone customer sat at the counter. Keeping his eyes on the clerk, Elmer fumbled for the overcoat.

The clerk turned. "Hey!" he sputtered. "What you——"

Blindly Elmer grabbed, then opened the sidedoor and plunged into the street. His feet beat a fast rhythm on the sidewalk. He was fifty feet away when the clerk hollered: "Come back here, you!"

Elmer cut across a lawn, streaked around a house and raced into an adjacent street. It seemed as if he had run blocks before his legs quit. Then he looked at the overcoat. Only it wasn't an overcoat. It was a white jacket similar to the one the clerk wore.

Oh, Lord, he groaned, every move I make gets me in deeper. Now I'm a thief over a clerk's jacket!

But he was cold and slipped into the jacket.

During the five years that Elmer had lived in this town he had delivered supplies everywhere and knew he was a block or two from Elmwood where the doctor lived. Why not go there? Perhaps he could catch another glimpse of the doctor to see if he really was the killer. Besides, if he went home now, wouldn't the killer be waiting?

That last thought set Elmer's feet in motion toward Elmwood. The office was in a two-story, facia-bricked building. A young woman sheathed in a fur coat came out as Elmer mounted the

steps. Sighting the curious little figure in the clerk's coat, she hesitated, one hand still holding the door ajar. It was an invitation for Elmer to enter.

"You'll catch your death of cold in that thin jacket," the girl warned.

"T-thanks," Elmer chattered, grabbing the door.

He soaked up warmth in the lobby, then dragged his feet to the doctor's office on the first floor. No light shone from under the office door. Nor through the keyhole. A sign read:

DR. HENRY M. STOVENS, M.D.
HOURS: Two to Four P. M.
EVENINGS BY APPOINTMENT

A second sign suggested: WALK IN.

Elmer sneezed. Gosh, now he *was* catching a cold and Emma would raise the dickens when he got back. Well, here he was. What to do? The office was deserted, the door unlocked, so he entered and snapped on the light.

Drawn black shades behind thick curtains at the window. New furniture. Magazines on the library table. Two pictures of mountain scenery on the wall. A door lettered PRIVATE.

Elmer tiptoed to the door and opened it. The faint odor of ether, or some disinfectant. He closed the door, pressed the light switch. Files. A broad desk. Medical books ranged in neat rows on shelves. A large picture on the wall. A man's face stared back at Elmer. Short straight hair, a long nose, half-smiling lips. Why it was——

His eyes located a large certificate of graduation from a medical college. It was in a dark corner of the room. Elmer placed a chair before it, focussed a goose-necked lamp for more illumination, mounted the chair. The name—Dr. Henry M. Stovens.

The "e" in the "Henry" looked as if it had been printed over an erased letter. A short curling line had been attached to the "r" so that the name read "Henry." The original had been "Harry."

Look at the capital M! A straight stroke added to a "N" had made that "M"! Harry N—could the original name have been that of Dr. Harry N. Stevers?"

Elmer did not hear the door open. So engrossed was he in the study of the last name of the altered certificate and its significance that he did not turn until a voice spoke.

"Good evening, Mr. Spraggins."

ELMER teetered on the chair, nearly fell off. He managed to turn. A big man wearing a gray hat and topcoat. He had a long nose. Once the eyes might have been kindly. They were hard now. The man was Dr. Stovens. No, Dr. Harry N. Stevers!

"Get down," the doctor ordered. The gun in his hand said the rest.

Elmer got down. Then he sneezed. "C—caught a cold," he stammered. "Thought you could f—fix me a prescription."

"I've got a good prescription for you, Spraggins!"

The doctor studied the room. "Not here," he decided aloud. "Too much noise. Maybe——" He gestured toward an inner doorway. "In the back office, snooper. A little chloroform is the prescription."

Elmer stared wildly. "No, no! You wouldn't—you can't——"

"Move."

Elmer wet his dry lips. "I won't tell the cops what you done back in Elk City! Honest, I——"

His eyes like marble, the doctor motioned with the gun. The buzzer rang. He whispered: "Keep quiet. Lucky I locked the door and switched off the lights!"

The buzzer rang a second time, more insistently. Then a steady, angry buzz-

ing. The buzzing stopped. "Gone," the doctor whispered. "Now I'll settle you good, Spraggins."

"Doc, I got a family—kids! Why, you delivered my little girl! Remember?"

"Yes, I remember."

His tone was bitter. "Spraggins, I'm sorry you moved from Elk City to this town and found me. After—after—well, what could I do but turn to medical work? I was safe here with so many doctors leaving for the service and there were no questions asked. Then you saw me! I'm tired of dodging from one city to another. Now it's either me or you!"

The doctor pointed to the door. "Move."

Woodenly Elmer turned toward the fatal door. One hand, the right, was jammed in the side pocket of the clerk's jacket. Elmer's fingers closed over an object. Grasping a straw——

He turned. His legs were numb. They wouldn't function. He couldn't walk through that door. The doctor would have to drag him to death. "Please," he begged, "I won't tell the cops."

"It's got to be this way, Spraggins."

The gun barrel pointed toward the rug. Elmer withdrew his hand. All he clutched was a half-opened cardboard box. Not much with which to face a gun. Elmer flung the box in the doctor's face. Gleaming thumb tacks, the kind which clerks use to tack posters and signs on the wall. Dozens of sharp, piercing points.

ELMER tried to run past the doctor, stumbled. His hundred-thirty pounds struck the doctor's gun hand and the gun fell to the rug. The doctor recovered, turned killer. He slammed a a fist into Elmer's ribs. Elmer staggered backward, crashed into the wall. His ribs ached from the blow. Never, never had he been so scared. The killer fumbled for the dropped gun.

"Run, run, there's a chance," Elmer's fear shouted.

He ran. One toe tripped on the scuffed up rug. Elmer plunged to the floor. His face struck the killer's hand. Instinctively Elmer grabbed the killer's wrist in both his hands. He clamped his teeth on the wrist. The big killer howled. He brought a fist down on Elmer's neck. Someone rapped on the window pane, but Elmer was past all hearing as fear clogged his eardrums.

His teeth bit deeper and deeper into the wrist. Something warm salted his tongue. Blood! A floor lamp crashed to the floor. A Windsor chair spun across the room. The doctor screeched in pain. A crackling, tinkling crash of glass. A draft of cold air. Something pounded hard on Elmer's neck. A light exploded in his brain. Slowly he blacked out....

The first thing Elmer saw when he came to were two policemen. The doctor lay on the rug, moaning. One hand clamped fast to his mangled wrist.

"Cripes," a cop panted, "what teeth you got!"

"Couldn't hardly get his wrist loose," the other cop growled. His eyes swept the disordered room. He picked up the gun. "Yours?" he asked Elmer.

"N-no, his." Elmer nodded at the doctor. "Three times today he tried to kill me!"

"Yeah? You better talk fast, squirt."

Elmer explained all that had happened from the sedan on Medford and Spring to the phone call from the drugstore.

One cop nodded. "The sergeant rushed us over to find out what you knew about that car. It was reported as stolen. The clerk told us about your taking that white jacket. He followed

you this far, then gave up and went back. Lucky for you we trailed over here."

"What's the rest?" the other cop asked.

"Once I lived in Elk City," Elmer explained. "The doctor—his name was Harry N. Stevers then—delivered one of my daughters. He left town suddenly. He—he killed a man in Elk City! He got away from the police. That was four-five years back, see? I—I delivered a package here about a week ago. He thought I recognized him, see?"

The doctor groaned: "He's lying. He tried a stickup."

"No, no," Elmer gasped. "Look at his medical certificate on the wall. You can see how he changed the letters to Dr. Henry M. Stovens! Look, will you?"

One of the cops scrutinized the certificate. "Why the little runt's right! 'Less you checked close you'd never know!" He turned to the other cop. "Buzz Headquarters. Get a tracer on that murder charge in Elk City."

Then he stared in amazement at Elmer's thin shoulders. "Why'd you tackle this big guy when he had a gun?"

Elmer stared. Tackle the big guy? Why—why it had all been an accident! He'd tried to run away. Still— He squared his shoulders. "I—I guess—well, I wanted to be like Mr. Markle, I guess. He was a hero too."

THE END

FBI HAS GONE TO WAR

A SUPERLATIVE war job is now being done by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Thousands of potential saboteurs are under arrest and the backbone of the German and Japanese epionage systems within our borders has been broken.

The FBI bas expanded enormously in the war against spies and saboteurs. Yet it has met its new tasks without confusion as a result of thorough planning, careful choice of personnel, and tbe common sense of tbe men wbo run it

In July 1941, the Sebold case netted German agents Frederick Duquesne and Axel Wheeler-Hill and 31 accomplices. In August 1941, Herr Kurt Ludwig, Gestapo agent, was arrested along with six assistants. And in December, Major Borchardt, friend and pupil of General Karl Hausbofer, tbe geopolitical planner of the Third Reich, landed in the FBI's detention cells. The big shots of German espionage were cbecked.

Tbe leaders of the Duquesne gang were convicted by the G-Men by actual motion pictures and recordings of their conversations, made from a room next to that of tbe conspirators. Posing as spies these Special Agents trailed every one of tbis group by secret radio station through which Duquesne transmitted bis reports to Germany. These reports bad been carefully edited by the U.S. military and naval intelligence officers to confuse and mislead the Germans and they did.

Gestapo man Ludwig finally fled and was picked up on the Pacific coast. During bis flight he stopped at a tourist camp to burn some incriminating papers. The G-Men wbo were trailing him let him burn the papers, later one of them gathered up tbe ashes, packed them carefully in cotton wool and sent them to Wasbington. The FBI technical laboratory treated and photographed tbe charred scraps and pieced them togetber into its original form.

In a master toucb of counter-espionage, the FBI caught in two weeks the eight Gestapo agents who arrived on our shores by submarine. The people wbo harbored them are now in jail.

The FBI was ready long before the war, since Mr. Hoover sent FBI men to visit the police departments of Europe wbere they learned the tricks of espionage, secret inks, modern coding and ciphering, the organization of rioting and street fighting, and the sabotaging of machinery.

J. Edgar Hoover's greatest problem was to get the man power to do tbe necessary work. Before the war hundreds applied every week, now the average is 1000.

Realizing that the war would require new types of work from the Bureau, Director Hoover eased bis previous rule that every Agent must be a lawyer or public accountant, and added to bis staff a group of men who know how to do everything from deciphering to building a radio station.

Local police forces bave been of great help to the FBI in cbecking thousands of suspects and arresting the guilty.

What tbis country needs is more J. Edgar Hoovers and more federal bureaus with tbe speed and efficiency of the FBI.—*A. Morris*

Not Suited for Murder

By STAN KNOWLTON

CYCIL WAUGHTON'S two coins registered with a dull, rattling clang. "On good time, tonight," he genially told the bus driver. He pulled out his watch. "Eleven twenty-three."

"Yeah," the driver answered. "Didn't make many stops this trip."

Cycil stepped off. With a grinding of gears the bus swung from the curb, rolling away, its tail-lights growing smaller in the darkness.

But Cycil was not watching the tail-lights. At a sharp run he already was headed for home. That's for a starter, he told himself. The driver would remember letting him off there at twenty-three minutes past eleven. And it was twenty-minutes walk to his house.

And it was: a good twenty minutes walk to Cycil's house by the road that looped the swampy, wood area between the main highway and the lonely, outskirt section where he lived.

Cycil smiled thinly. "But it's not taking me twenty minutes, *tonight*," he muttered.

He slipped between the bars of the white-painted fence that bordered the side-walk, pushed through the tall dry grass and brush to the edged of the swamp. Gnarled trees, rich in the colorful foliage of early fall, rose crookedly from the soggy soil, leaf-thick vines trailing heavily from their twisted branches.

Cycil turned up his collar, took a flashlight from his pocket, stepped in between the trees. The ground squished moistly beneath his feet. By the light of his torch, dimmed through the blue paper he had pasted over the lens, he picked his way.

He had made the trip once. Several weeks before, when the green leaves were beginning to turn to yellow-orange, he had made it. Carefully, painstakingly he had gone through, mapping out in his mind the quickest way from the highway to his house on the far side. But that was in daylight, and he was dressed for it. Stout, high leather boots, corduroy breeches and canvas hunting jacket.

And the shotgun he had carried backed up his story to Martha: he had been out hoping to flush a partridge in the swampland.

"You're filthy!" had been Martha's reaction. "Get out of those clothes and take a bath!"

And Cycil had. His lips, turned sullen at the thought of his wife, twisted away from his white teeth. But, he swore savagely, he would take no more orders from her!



ONLY ONE THING WAS NECESSARY TO MAKE CYCIL WAUGHTON'S MURDER PLAN PERFECT —HE HAD TO BURN HIS BRITCHES BEHIND HIM. SO HE BURNED THEM!

ILLUSTRATED BY JULIAN S. KRUPA

His marriage for money had not panned out as he had expected. He was still working at his old job; still communting to and from the city. At first, Martha had driven him to the bus stop in the morning, picked him up there in the evening. But not now. Now, he walked—both ways. And what he wanted, or needed, he paid for from the money he earned—from what of it was left after he had turned over to Martha his share of the household expenses.

And — damn her — Martha's domineering ways. Cycil cursed as the remembrance of them flashed across his mind. Do this, Cycil—Cycil, do that. She ordered him around as she saw fit, planned for him his every move. Each night she laid out his socks, underwear, shirt and tie for the next day, told him which of his three suits he was to wear.

CYCIL swore roundly as his foot slipped off a tufted hillock, sank to the knee in the sticky mire. He grasped a tree trunk, worked up his leg. His foot came out of the mud with a sucking plutt!

And what a hell of a fuss Martha had made when he bought that last suit without consulting her. A suit exactly like one he already had. She had said that he was crazy. Crazy! Yeah. He grinned to himself. Crazy—like a fox. He knew why he wanted two suits alike. He had known when he got the second one, months ago.

Cycil plunged on through the bog, his legs soaked to the knees by the muddy water, his clothing torn and disheveled by the clinging brambles and snapping branches. At the edge of the woods near his house, he stopped; by the light of his flash he looked at his watch. Eleven thirty-one. Eight minutes to come through. He had a lee-way of twelve minutes in which to make the phone call, and another five or six to complete his plan—to make it tightly fool-proof.

As he had expected, the house was dark. Martha no longer waited up for him on the nights that he was detained at the office. She had made no comment the previous evening when he informed her that he would have to work late the following night, but he had no doubt that she had checked with the firm.

On the lawn in front of the house he wiped some of the mud and slime from his shoes, removed them. He carried them in his hand up the steps to the veranda. He unlocked the door. Noiselessly he opened it; closed it behind him. Silently, in his stockinged feet, he went to the kitchen, snapped on the light. He left the shoes in the sink, descended the stairs to the cellar. From a beam overhead he took an old-fashioned .32 which he had owned since he was a young fellow. A gun no one, not even Martha, knew he possessed.

Cycil went back to the kitchen. His watch said eleven thirty-five. He had plenty of time. He climbed the carpeted stairs to the second floor, threw the switch to the hall light by Martha's bedroom door. He could hear her measured breathing from inside the room. He opened the door.

The shaded bulb in the hallway threw a diffused light into the bedroom. Cycil could plainly see Martha. She lay huddled under the neat, white bedclothes, her nightcapped head turned sidewise on the feather pillow. She was sleeping the untroubled sleep of the just.

Cycil spoke sharply. "Martha!"

Martha stirred uneasily. Cycil spoke again. "Martha!"

Martha sat up, stared sleepily at him. Cycil's aim was good. Martha slumped back, a stain of crimson on the white of her nightgown over her breast.

Cycil worked rapidly. He dragged Martha from the bed, laid her on the floor. He disarranged the bedclothing. He kicked askew the rug. He knocked several articles from the dresser—perfumes, powders, a mirror. He overturned a chair. He surveyed with satisfaction the havoc he had wrought. Mute testimony, he figured, of the valiant struggle Martha had made for her life.

For a moment Cycil looked callously down at her. Now, he gloated, he was sitting pretty. Martha never had made a will. Everything would come to him. No more slaving for a paltry salary. No more skimping for this and that. No more being roused from a warm bed on cold mornings. No more commuting back and forth—back and forth—back and forth. How he hated it! And, too—a warmness tingled through him—there was that cute little blonde at the office.

Cycil left the hall light burning, hurried down to the kitchen. Eleven-thirty-nine. In four minutes he must make the phone call. He wiped the gun, held it in his handkerchief-mittened hand. He opened the kitchen door, stepped out on the back piazza. He hurled the gun far into the night. Let them find it. There would be no finger prints on it; it could not be traced to him.

BACK in the kitchen, the door again locked, Cycil stripped off his coat, vest, trousers and socks. He wrapped them into a sodden ball, the muddy shoes in the center. He turned on the cellar light, hastened down the steps. Deep under the coal in the bin he buried the soggy bundle. He was panting when he got back to the kitchen. He unlocked a pantry window, raised the sash. He tipped over things on the shelf under the window, spilled them on the floor. He rinsed his hands at the sink, dried them.

Eleven forty-three. He had planned things to the dot! Had he come around by the road from the bus stop, he would have been getting home now.

In his dress shirt, tie, shorts and bare feet, he dialed the operator.

"Emergency!" he barked breathlessly into the receiver. "Get the police!"

"Police station," came back to him after a moment. "Lieutenant——"

"Quick!" Cycil cut him off. "Send the police! My wife's been murdered! I just got home and found her. Some prowler got in through the pantry window and——

Yes! . . . 43 Lambert Street. . . . Hurry! Hurry!"

Cycil hung up. He had five or six minutes before the police could get there. He darted up the front stairs, flung himself into his bedroom, snapped on the light. He put on fresh socks, another pair of oxfords. He carefully scrutinized himself in the mirror of his dresser. On his mad journey through the wooded swamp his upturned coat collar had protected the shirt and tie. They were no more soiled than from an ordinary day's wear.

Cycil went to the closet, reached into it. Crazy, was he? Crazy to have two suits exactly alike? Yeah. Crazy . . . He reached deeper into the closet. Crazy. Yeah. Like a—— He opened the door wider, peered inside. Perplexity shadowed his face. He looked around the room—on the chairs, on the bed.

He rushed to his wife's room, turned on the light. He looked in her closet, on the chairs. He dashed down stairs to the first floor, looked through all the rooms. He stumbled back to his own room. "Where the hell——?" He was sobbing wildly. "Where the hell——?"

Cycil again looked in his closet. Only

three empty suit-hangers met his eyes.

"Where the hell——?"

He looked dazedly around the room, saw a paper on the dresser. In his haste he had not noticed it. He snatched it up. His eyes raced over the bold, angular writing—Martha's.

Cycils' flushed face turned ashen. He clutched at the dresser. For a moment he stood rigidly there, staring unseeingly into space.

Then he again read the note. "No, Martha," he whispered. *"No!"*

A third time he read it. Stumbling, incoherently he mouthed the words. " 'Wear the same suit tomorrow, Cycil,' " he mumbled. " 'I sent the other two to the cleaners.' "

Unhurriedly, methodically he tore the missive into tiny shreds, cupped them in his hand. Then Cycil tossed back his head and laughed. Laughed long and loudly. "Yeah," he chortled. " 'Wear the same suit——' "

From a distance came the sound of a siren.

In a gesture of resignation, of utter futility, he threw up his hands, loosed the fistful of tattered paper bits. Slowly, like drifting snowflakes, they sifted down, gently settled on his head, on his shoulders.

Outside, a motor hummed; brakes screeched. Then came running, crunching footsteps on the graveled walk. A thumping on the door.

GASPARILLA—ARISTOCRATIC PIRATE

TO THE lists of swash-buckling captains that have fought and laughed their way along the coasts of the youthful, growing United States, recent investigation has added the name of Jose Gaspar, or Captain Gasparilla as he was known in the rascalous pirate society of the 1800's. Of all the handsome Castillians who turned their talents to piracy, he was the handsomest; of all the fabulous Kings of the Pirate World, he was the most daring and romantic; and of all the murderous cutthroats who ruthlessly massacred for coin and jewels, he was the most merciless.

The story of this pirate king makes adventurous reading. Born in 1756 of one of the wealthiest and most highly respected families of Spain, Jose Gaspar seemed destined for the respectable life of a Grandee. He felt the weight of this respectability early and joined the navy to escape it. There the fire and the spirit that was so characteristic of his actions brought him quick promotion and he soon reached the rank of Captain.

The sea seemed the natural home for his adventuresome spirit and, with Spain depending on her navy to protect her precarious possessions, Jose Gaspar could easily have become an admiral. But Gaspar was a restless rascal—and dishonest to hoot—and was soon in "hot water" with his government. It was circumstance that forced a decision. He was selected by the Crown to deliver a package of precious jewels; Gaspar was plagued by temptation. A few small jewels out of this huge collection could so easily extricate him from his embarrassing position in regard to several gambling debts. It seemed a shame to overlook the opportunity. He succumbed.

Well, the Spanish government was quite put out. Respectable family or no they could hardly allow the Crown's jewels to be pilfered without punishing the culprit. They moved quickly to arrest Gaspar, the thief, but they did not move quickly enough. He suspected their intention and led them a merry chase halfway across Spain. Finally, after commandeering a vessel in one of the Spanish harbors, he set sail with the threats of his countrymen behind him and the future a precarious one, to say the least.

But Jose Gaspar was a confident culprit without a shred of conscience to make him turn back! If society would not seek to understand his adventurous soul, then "hang society and let the devil take the hindmost." If he were to be an outcast, then at least he would be a successful and wealthy outcast!

Gasparilla, for so he called himself, won over the crew of his stolen ship with the shrewd and cunning tongue that was his happiest weapon.

"Run up the black flag," they cheered. "Gasparilla is our chief, and we will follow him to the death!" They headed for the Spanish Main. There the richly laden vessels ploughed the seas to and fro between Spain and her colonies filled with gold and silver from the Mexican mines and expensive finery for the Spanish nobles who ruled the colonial possessions. They were rich prizes for the pirates who sailed the seas in hunt for quarry. Gasparilla was determined not just to

have his share but to establish himself at the head of this murdering pirate society and reign as a true Pirate King.

As a fitting home for a King of the Pirates, Gasparilla chose the Florida bay now known as Charlotte Harbor. On a little isle now named Gasparilla Island he landed men and guns. There he put his men to work constructing a place of residence for "his majesty." In legend it is described as a palatial home filled with pieces of the finest Spanish furniture, with china and glassware of exquisite workmanship—all the booty and plunder acquired in their attacks upon unwary merchantmen. It was as if Spain, the country that had been so unappreciative of his talents, had suddenly relented and sent these cargoes specifically for his use. Gasparilla expressed his pleasure at their kindness and generosity of emptying the cargo-holds of Spanish ships regularly and inevitably.

But it was not with genteel manners and subtle tongue that Captain Gaspar made his conquests. He was as quick and facile with the pistol and the sword as he was relentlessly murderous and plunderous. Moreover, and this was his tour de force, the years he spent with the Spanish navy had made him master of the long guns that his ships carried in great number. This, together with a native cunning, made him a tremendous success in the blood business of piracy.

More than one merchantman, while sailing peacefully through the calm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, saw a sleek dark ship appear from out a cove on the Florida shore. While the unsuspecting cargo-ship would maintain its steady course toward the Atlantic, the strange vessel would set its course to intercept. Suddenly from its sides would pour a deadly volley of shot and shell, aimed to tear the galleons rigging and bring down spars and sails. Then the pirate ship would race in violently to ram the helpless victim. Over her side would swarm the murdering cutthroats with bowie knives and pistols pulled for action, and always at their head would be Gasparilla, bloody King of the Pirates!

The battling would be swift and furious. His men would scourge the ship from stem to stern. After the victory those men of the merchantman who had not fallen in the fight would be given a single choice. Either they joined the pirate crew of Gasparilla or were quickly murdered. No man aboard was permitted to escape to tell the bloody tale.

Toward the women, however, this rascal had an attitude characterized by the gentlemanly gallantry of the Spanish nobleman and the egotistical barbarism of the Pirate King. He maintained a harem of innumerable females taken from the ships voyaging toward the New World with wives for the Spanish colonists. Those ladies of quality whom he chose as his concubines were wined and dined, treated royally as if he were courting them in a royal palace. But the results were inevitable.

When he tired of them he would pass them on to his men. They too maintained harems on a much smaller scale than the King.

Gasparilla's dual nature can best be seen in the story of an encounter which he had with a noble Spanish princess whom he kidnapped on one of his raids. She was a beautiful woman, aristocratic and proud. Gasparilla played the adoring swain and applied all the courteous gallantry that he had learned as a Spanish nobleman.

This woman, however, did not succumb. She criticized him bitterly for his actions in preying on the ships of his own countrymen. Gasparillo had expected coldness at first and accepted her anger calmly; he invited her to stay at his home.

There he continued his wooing in a most persuasive manner. She refused his attentions and told him in no uncertain terms her opinion of him. Her criticism was an insult to his egotistical nature, and sensing her resistance as unmovable, he drew his pistol and shot her through the heart.

King Gasparilla reigned over his pirate kingdom for many years. But, as was inevitable, his plundering forced the great nations into action. Campaigns aimed at destroying the pirates were carried out with determination and strong force. They were caught and hanged as ruthlessly as they had murdered and plundered. Gasparilla saw the handwriting on the wall and decided to break his reign. So, calling his men together, he divided the booty which is said to have been over thirty millions in gold and silver, and he prepared to sail away with his share of the loot and favorite concubines.

Just as they were heaving up anchor; they sighted a large ship entering the bay. Gasparilla rubbed his hands as he thought that this last haul would be a fitting farewell gift for the breaking up of his "kingdom." This large lumbering merchantman, seemingly British, would probably be well-loaded with expensive wares. With his sword waving, he shouted to his men.

Suddenly a tremendous roar rent the air. Round shot screeched and crashed through the hull and rigging of the pirate ship. Men fell dead and wounded; spars came tumbling down; splinters flew, and guns were dismounted. The disguised merchantman was actually a warship of the United States Navy, and it raced upon the stricken pirate ship, turning upon Gasparilla his own ruthless tactics.

Gasparilla was trapped! There was not the slightest chance of offering resistance; no escape was possible, the pirate saw only the hangman's noose as his inevitable punishment. Gasparilla faltered.

Suddenly his decision was made. Seizing a piece of chain cable, he wound it about his waist. Then, with a defiant shout to his foes, he leaped into the sea—spectacular to the end. A fitting exit for the King of Pirates.—*Marian Adams*



"Don't try any funny stuff," was the warning



MURDER MAKER

BY PAUL SELONKE

This red-head was beautiful, and even without provocation men would have fought—or killed for her!

WITH idle curiosity, Tommy Brent studied the girl who had walked around the corner on the opposite side of Fifth Avenue. She was wearing a short black Persian lamb coat that obviously had cost a lot of money, and a neat full-brimmed hat that seemed to have been expressly molded for her head.

The girl took about ten steps up the block, then stopped as though undecided. She was not the type one usually found in this dingy vicinity, and the way she kept peering up and down the avenue, it appeared she was nervous about something.

Tommy Brent had a commanding view of the intersection from where he

stood waiting in a dark doorway, and he could see nothing except deserted loneliness. Imagining this poor little rich girl was here to secretly meet her date—probably someone her family had forbidden her to see, he dismissed her from his mind. The skinny, raw-boned police reporter was disgruntled that Georgie Harker hadn't shown up yet.

Not that he and Harker were friends. They weren't. Harker, who was a gossip columnist with the same paper he worked on, had printed too much dirt on Brent's personal friends. Nor did he trust Harker. Harker regularly ran big-money poker games with Toby Scott, a questionable ex-bookie who operated a cigar store in the adjoining block.

It was the typewritten note Harker had sent him that had brought Brent here. The note had read:

TOMMY—*Let's forget our differences and work to our mutual advantage. The fact is, I've got a tip on where Mara Marshall is. She's mixed deep in something that will make hot headlines. But it's a two-man job to swing the story. How about sharing the by-line with me when I file?*

If you're interested, meet me at the corner of Fourth and Main at eight tonight.

GEORGIE HARKER.

How Harker had gotten wind of the missing Mara Marshall was beyond Brent. Because Brent was his and Mara's friend, the wealthy John Marshall had enlisted the police reporter's aid in locating his young wife after she fled to the city from his downstate farm. It had all been done secretly in an effort to get the impulsive Mara back without nasty publicity.

Brent hadn't found a trace of Mara in her old haunts. And the startling knowledge that Harker apparently knew plenty about her frightened Brent a little. Knowing the kind of rat Harker was——

THE girl on the other side of the avenue began walking back toward the corner. This time her face was plain to Brent in the street light. A beautiful oval face, lily-white, framed in gleaming red hair. The girl was Mara Marshall!

It was so unexpected, Brent momentarily lost his head. He charged across the street, yelling, "Say, wait a minute, Mara! Wait!"

She gave him one quick, backward glance. Then with a flash of silken legs, she ran around the corner and down Main Street. She twisted into a between-building passageway in the middle of the block and vanished.

Brent was close behind her. And when he hammered through the black, narrow passageway and into a wide cobblestoned service alley, he collided with a tall, thin man. The man swore as they tangled, throwing a quick punch at Brent's head. The hook came up from his hip and had enough power to knock Brent off balance.

Brent caught at the brick wall beside them to keep from falling. He struggled back erect, snarling, "You dirty —" But by that time the tall man was halfway up the passageway.

Brent twisted back to the service alley and raked his eyes about the darkness, searching for the girl. There was no immediate sign of her. Yet he was sure she hadn't had the time to get to the single street-exit of the alley. The street light across from the alley mouth revealed no sign of her running toward it.

That was the moment he spotted the lighted and wide-open door which led

into the rear of the narrow, two-storied old brick building directly opposite him. It was the rear entrance to Toby Scott's cigar store. This door, he recalled, led into the back room where Toby and Georgie Harker held their poker games.

It gave him a queer feeling that Mara Marshall had run into this particular alley. Considering that Harker knew things about the girl, the possibility arose in Brent's mind that she might have ducked into Toby's back room. He hurried to the wide open rear door, stepped through it and stood motionless.

The back room was barren-looking, its pea-green paint peeling and hanging in hideous strips from the walls. A drop-cord cone light hung low above an old-fashioned round dining table that had around eight or nine wooden folding chairs drawn up to it.

BRENT saw a thin young man, with thick, perfectly-combed straw-colored hair, leaning against the frame of the inside doorway. It was Georgie Harker. The gossip columnist had one hand clutched to his narrow chest, the lapels of his gabardine coat bunched together in his skinny fist. He looked a bit drunk.

"Okay, I meet you here instead of on the corner," snapped Brent. "Tell me where the girl is. I'm pretty sure she ducked into this back room."

"Girl?" blurted Harker. "What girl?"

"I saw Mara Marshall out on the street and chased her in this direction. I'm positive that she's here, considering the way you're acting."

Harker swayed, gasped out: "It was no girl. It was a gun—exploding in my face—" and he sank limply to the floor as if he didn't have a muscle in his body.

Brent stooped over him, snarled: "Listen, you damned drunken—" He stopped short, hair rising on his neck as he stared at Harker. The columnist's hand was away from his chest now, and Brent saw the blood that stained the man's shirt-front. There were two ragged bullet holes in the blood stain, close to the heart.

A quick grab at Harker's wrist revealed to Brent that there was no pulse. Georgie Harker was dead. He had died the same instant he had slumped down.

Brent had to fight back the chilling horror that gripped him. In God's name, who had killed Harker, and for what reason? It was madness to believe Toby Scott had killed him. Toby wouldn't have left the body here in his wide-open back room to damn him.

Thought of Mara rushed back to Brent, and he hurried through the door which took him toward the front. He found no sign of her in the darkened cigar store. The street door was still tight-bolted, chain-locked.

Long strides carried him up the narrow staircase which led out of the shop and up to Toby's flat on the second floor. Toby wasn't up in the flat. Neither was Mara. And Brent became tortured with the fear that the girl had not come into the building after all. Worse, he had walked straight into the murder of a man who was his known enemy!

He returned to the back room where Harker lay. There was no trace of the murder gun anywhere. He hastily searched Harker, despite that the out-turned pockets betrayed that the killer had searched the columnist too. And he discovered something in the man's vest pocket which the killer had missed—a calling card, folded into a wad. A message, scribbled on the back of it, read:

We've got to locate Mara before she

can cause us dangerous trouble. And by all means, keep an eye on my damned brother-in-law.

BRENT turned the card over. His eyes narrowed as he read the name imprinted on it:

VINCENT DURANT
25 RIVERSIDE DRIVE

He knew Durant—a small, benevolent-looking man of fifty, a familiar figure around the night spots. He had never trusted Durant. He never trusted churchy-appearing men who hang around the rowdy clubs.

Did Rurant write this note to Harker? If so, what was the significance? If Harker was working with him in some illegal enterprise, in what fantastic way could Mara Marshall figure in the picture?

And who was this brother-in-law the writer had asked Georgie Harker to watch?

Brent thought of his old friend, Charlie Bowland. Charlie was up on almost everyone who haunted the night clubs. He practically lived in the clubs and knew Durant very well. There was a chance he would know if Durant had a brother-in-law.

Shoving the card into his watch-pocket, Brent turned to the wall phone he knew stood beside the inside door . . . then went rigid, staring at how the receiver was hanging off the hook. His little scene with Harker probably had been audible at Central, if some girl had listened in at the time.

A fresh spasm of worry assailed him, driving home the full horror of his position. His bitterness against Georgie Harker was well known to the police. They would be quick to suspect that he and Harker had argued again—an argument which, this time, had ended fatally.

He saw no good in troubling over that now. While he still had the chance, he had to dig to the very bottom of this mystery to save his own neck. And he took a step toward the phone to get that call through to Charlie Bowland.

"Stay where you are, Tommy!" a voice suddenly warned from the still open door to the alley.

He whirled around and saw the figure of Detective-Lieutenant Ferguson stepping into the room. It brought him a sick, nauseating feeling of hopelessness. Ferguson was the one officer on the Force who had a deep malignant grudge against him.

CHAPTER II

Where Is Mara?

AS TWO uniformed officers crowded in behind him, Ferguson waggled his revolver meaningly at Brent. "Just stay where you are, Tommy," he repeated. "I don't want to have to punch holes in your carcass."

Brent glared. "You're a damned idiot!"

"We'll see." Ferguson walked over and examined the dead columnist. "Well, well—it's Georgie Harker. I seem to recall you and him never got along together—isn't that right?"

"Ferguson—if you had half a brain—"

"Strange. The murder gun is nowhere in the room." Ferguson frisked the police reporter. "Not on you either. Where did you hide it? Better tell us, Tommy. We'll be bound to find it quick enough."

Brent's hot gaze burned into Ferguson's round reddish face. Ferguson's face might have been handsome, except for the drooping eyelids and deep-slashed lines around the warped lips. At the moment, the lieutenant was glow-

ing with an evil joy.

"Yeah—I know," growled Brent. "You're out to get even with me. Ever since that time I butted in when you started beating up that girl who wouldn't tell where her crooked brother was hiding out—"

"That's got nothing to do with it. I've got facts. I was about a half-mile from here, up Main Street, making a routine investigation, when headquarters phoned me and told me to come here. Headquarters told me the phone operator said Harker was trying to get your room at the Imperial Hotel when somebody came in and started to argue and fight with him. She heard the shots."

"You utter lame-brain! The fact Harker was calling me on the phone is proof enough I'm in the clear." Brent tapped a finger on Ferguson's broad chest. "You're not going to railroad me on this killing. The inspector is on to you. He knows you've been laying for me ever since I had that suspension hung on your neck."

Ferguson smirked. "We'll see who packs the weight around here. You're going to be whittled down plenty," and turned to the phone to call headquarters.

It took only ten minutes for the homicide crew to reach the murder scene. Inspector Wade—tall, gray-headed, his rugged face grim—came with them, and he asked Tommy Brent to tell his story.

THERE was no sense in mixing Mara Marshall into the mess, and Brent said: "I got a note from Georgie Harker this evening. He said he wanted bygones to be bygones and that he had some hot news story he wanted to share with me. He was supposed to meet me at a corner near here. When he didn't show up, I thought he might be here with Toby Scott. The back door was wide open, and I found him here like this. Toby was nowhere around. So help me, Inspector, that's the truth."

"Don't believe him, Mr. Wade," Ferguson sneered. "You know yourself how he and Harker got along."

Wade gave Ferguson a sharp look and turned back to Brent. "We won't hold you, Tommy. But I suggest you stay close-by in the event we need you."

Brent took a deep breath of relief. He hadn't been expecting a break like this.

"Thanks, Inspector," he said. "I appreciate your faith in me."

"It isn't exactly faith," Inspector Wade told him. "Recently I heard a rumor that Harker was bragging a lot about some big-time blackmail setup here in town. Whether he's in it or not, I don't know. One way or the other, it hints this might be something bigger than a mere grudge ending between you and him."

Brent's eyes flicked wide as he thought of the scribbled card he'd found in Harker's pocket. He said nothing, turned and walked toward the alley door.

He saw Ferguson glaring maliciously at him. Plainly, by fair trick or foul, Ferguson was going to do all in his power to nail him to the wall for the crime. It wasn't a very comfortable feeling.

He walked back to Main Street and took a trolley to the old Imperial Hotel, where he lived. During the ride, he struggled to think sanely, knowing he was far from being in the clear yet. By necessity, he would have to dig around for additional clues to his own innocence. At the same time, he had the grim premonition that Mara Marshall was somehow hooked up with Harker's murder too.

HIS thoughts went back to the old days, when Mara was doing her

remarkable tap-dance routine in the higher class supper clubs. She was lovely, smooth, breath-taking—much different from the pigtailed, freckled girl he had been raised with in that small Iowa farm town. His regard for her was more than admiration, but he knew he didn't have a chance, considering all the society men with whom she was keeping company.

A little over a year ago, she married one of them—John Marshall, a pen-and-ink artist who lived on a small estate forty miles downstate, devoting most of his time at raising prize beef. Some time before, Brent had been a close friend of Marshall, and he was convinced that the marriage was a good match.

Marshall had come up to town the previous week, looking worried. Mara had left him, leaving a note saying she was returning to the city for good "so I can have some fun instead of being cooped up here with the rest of your prime Herefords." That wasn't at all like Mara, yet Marshall assured Brent that there had been no argument between them. He begged Brent to locate her and bring her back without ugly publicity. And Brent had promised.

Now, though, Brent worried over the real reason behind her flight to the city. Considering that Inspector Wade had said Harker probably had been in a shakedown setup, had these blackmailers—in possession of awkward facts in regard to Mara's or her husband's past—forced her to return to town for some fantastic reason? And had she crossed them up, so that now they were searching for her as a definite danger to their organization—as the scribbled calling card suggested?

But in that case, why hadn't she returned directly downstate to Marshall's farm? And why had she been wandering so carelessly out in the open? Whom had she been looking for on that street corner? Queerest of all, why had Harker written him that note, begging him to meet him on that same corner?

BRENT tried to convince himself that he was reasoning wrong. And there was only one way to find out if Mara was in some way connected with Harker's death—and that was by questioning the girl himself. But at the moment, that seemed like wishful thinking. It looked like he would never get near her again . . .

Finally, when he reached the Imperial Hotel and got to his room on the second floor, he was surprised to find a note pinned to his door. The note, written in a firm feminine hand, read:

TOMMY—*I need your help badly. Will you come to where I live—Apartment 2B at the Carleton House—as soon as you can? I am living there under the name of Lorna Johns.*

MARA MARSHALL.

Tommy Brent stood stiffly, rereading the short message. It brought to mind his blackmail theory. And the fact that Mara had not called him into this till now made him feel that the murder of Harker had placed her in a very dangerous position.

Why had Harker been killed? Could it be that he had gone soft on Mara and had been ironed out in an attempt to rescue her from that gang? Somehow that fit with the way the gossip columnist had arranged to meet him on that street corner.

Brent went into his room and turned on the light, musing over the irony of this new, unexpected twist. Charlie Bowland lived in Apartment 2A in the Carleton House—was the girl's neighbor. And Brent had often visited his old friend at that flat during the past week.

He took out a snub-nosed revolver

that was hidden in the bottom drawer of his dresser, checked the loaded weapon and thrust it into his pocket. Granted that he was correct about why Harker had been murdered, this gang plainly was desperate to get the girl back for their own purposes. They probably would burn down anybody who stood between them and Mara. With this uncomfortable thought in mind, he walked out of his room again.

THE minute he reached the street and looked for a cab, he spotted a lean man with a turned-up topcoat standing in the building shadows. He recognized him as one of Ferguson's detectives, and it brought back the full impact of his own predicament.

He went to work on the detective, leading him a crazy route—in and out of taxicabs, hotels, and railway stations. A good twenty minutes were wasted, shuttling back and forth like this, but it paid off in the end. Later, when he was finally striding up to the Carleton House, there was no sign of his shadow.

The hulking, four-storied Carleton House was one of those typical remodeled old places one finds in the back streets of town, and it had been doctored up to look Colonial—painted alabaster white, with bright-green shutters at the windows. No one was in the big front hall as Brent entered, and he went directly to the second floor and knocked on the door marked 2B.

Mara did not answer his knock, which worried him. If she had left a message for him to come here at once, desperate as it seemed she was, surely she would be waiting for him. He knocked again, loudly.

"What's wrong, Tommy?" a voice behind him said. "Worried because Miss Johns isn't in?"

Brent saw the house manager standing near the head of the stairs—a young blond man, with greased-down hair parted in the middle, and a thin, sensitive face. His name was Endicott and was one of the men who often had played in the poker games in the rear of Toby Scott's cigar store.

"Is she?" Brent asked.

Endicott shook his head. "She went out some time ago and I haven't seen her since. What's the matter? Did she stand you up on a date?"

"Maybe. Tell me, has this girl got red hair and . . ." Brent described Mara Marshall in detail.

The manager grinned; nodded. "You must have been peeking in her windows, son."

Brent scowled. Positive now that the girl was Mara, he wondered again why she hadn't come directly here after leaving that note on his door.

"Charlie Bowland in?" he asked.

"Yeah," nodded Endicott. "I saw him come in a few minutes ago. He looked keyed up."

"He's generally keyed up or tanked up," muttered Brent, and went over and pounded on door 2A.

The door opened carefully a few inches, which wasn't Charlie's gladhand style at all. Charlie spoke from inside, nervously: "Who . . . who is it? Oh, it's you, Tommy! Come on in. Come on in."

Brent entered and walked into the living room of the flat, which was furnished in cheap Early American manner. He studied his old friend curiously.

"What's eating you, Charlie?"

"Nothing—nothing a tall," Charlie said. "Have a chair, kid, while I rassle you up a drink."

BRENT sank into a soft chair, watching Charlie work at his liquor cabinet. Charlie Bowland was tall, thin, with a wealth of white hair, and dressed

in a natty striped gray suit. Years ago, Brent had given up trying to talk Charlie out of the life he led. Women and liquor were all that seemed important to the lovable old reprobate. The weakness for women kept him in constant trouble.

Charlie swiftly manufactured two whiskey sodas. He worked a bit awkwardly, favoring his right hand. It bothered him as he handled the syphon.

"What's wrong with your mitt?"

Charlie jerked nervously, but he didn't answer till he brought the drinks to the table beside Brent. He smiled. "Like an ass, I slipped in the bathroom. Half-sprained my wrist, damn it."

They sipped their drinks a moment.

"Remember that girl I mentioned I'm looking for?" Brent asked suddenly.

Charlie nodded. "Yeah—Mara Marshall. You showed me a picture of her and asked me to keep my eyes peeled for her in the night spots. Why?"

"I saw her out on the street tonight, but she got away."

"The hell you say."

"I found out something else too. The girl who lives next door to you here—Lorna Johns—is actually Mara Marshall."

Charlie almost choked on his drink. "My God, is that right? Well, what do you know. I never—"

"What do you know about her, Charlie? What about visitors she's had? See many of them?"

"No. In fact, I never even got a look at the gal. She's only a name to me," and it seemed Charlie was choosing his words a little too carefully.

"What about Vin Durant?" asked Brent. "Did he ever come around?"

Charlie looked at Brent steadily. Then he drained his drink and set the glass on the table.

"No," he said. "I never saw him around."

"You're a friend of Durant's. Tell me, did you ever meet his brother-in-law?"

Charlie's eyes turned momentarily hard. "No, I never knew he even has a brother-in-law. For that matter, Durant and I aren't as good friends as a lot of people think."

BRENT started a bit in surprise, hearing Charlie say that. It sounded like a lie and bothered him like did the way Charlie was nervous and keyed up.

Brent rose up. "Well, if you spot this girl coming in, go over in her flat and see that she can't get away. Tie her up if necessary."

"I will if she comes around in time," Charlie told him. "I'm just getting ready for a weekend in the country. I'll be leaving in a minute."

"Good idea. The country air probably will do you a lot of good," and Brent went out of the flat. He knocked on the girl's door again. Getting no response, he wondered if he should break into her flat for a look-around. He finally decided against it.

He was thinking of Charlie Bowland as he left the building. Charlie was in another one of his jams. There seemed no doubt that he was sneaking out of town a while until the trouble blew over.

"Probably some blonde's husband is hunting for his scalp," Brent reflected as he headed out of the Carleton House.

He dropped into a drugstore down the block. He telephoned the *Blue Gardens* night club, where Vin Durant generally spent his evenings.

"Look, Frank," he said after he got connected with the headwaiter. "I've got to talk with Vin Durant. Try and find some reason for keeping him at your joint till I reach there. Sic one of your bar blondes on him, if necessary, but make him stay put."

"Tommy, Mr. Durant isn't here," the headwaiter replied. "He went out about a half-hour ago. He seemed very worried. He hasn't been himself at all recently. Business troubles, perhaps."

"Did you hear where he went?"

"He said he was going straight home."

"Thanks, Frank. Confidentially though, do you think he's worried over his brokerage business, or is it something else not so honest?"

"I'm sure it's business," maintained the headwaiter. "It couldn't be anything crooked. Mr. Durant is very decent."

"Sure, because he pays you such nice tips. Do you think the trouble might be between him and Charlie Bowland?"

"Charlie Bowland? Tommy, that's impossible. They are very close friends."

"That's what I thought too," and Tommy Brent hung up, frowning. He went out of the drugstore and luckily found a cruising cab. As he rode away, he noticed that it had started to rain lightly, depressingly . . .

CHAPTER III

Sleeping Beauty

IT WAS still raining when the cab dropped him off near Durant's residence on Riverside Drive. The rain was steadier now. From all appearances, it seemed that the town was in for a wet, disagreeable night.

Tommy Brent looked up and down the street to be sure one of Ferguson's men hadn't spotted him and followed him here. Seeing no one, he put up his coat collar and headed toward Durant's.

Judging from the home he had, Durant was decidedly in the bucks. It was a huge stone mansion set in a landscaped grounds of well-tended trees and shrubs and wide-sweeping lawn. As Brent took a short cut across the lawn, heading toward the drive that curved up to a hulking porte-cochere, he was more than ever convinced Durant was making his money the wrong way.

Brent halted, eyes narrowing, when he spotted the brief flare of a match almost directly ahead of him. He hadn't yet reached the driveway, and he peered intently at the shrubs on this side of the port-cochere, where he had seen the brief light. Then he saw a dim, tiny red glow. Someone was behind those shrubs, smoking.

Whoever it was, was watching the entrance to the house. Why? There seemed only one answer to that. Durant had been tipped off he probably was coming here—tipped off by the headwaiter at the *Blue Gardens* or someone else. A guard must have been posted to see that this unwanted visitor did not get into the mansion.

The fact that Durant did not want to see him made Brent more than anxious to speak to the man. He slid his gun from his pocket and advanced toward the guard from the rear. The fresh-clipped lawn, soft from the rain, made no sound beneath his feet.

HE SAFELY reached a thick elm tree which stood near the shrubbery. Digging eyes into the dark ahead of him, he could make out the figure of the hunching guard—a stocky, small-statured man impatiently sucking at a glowing cigarette.

It was Toby Scott, the man who owned the cigar store where Harker had been murdered!

Brent's suspicions of Toby rose up again. He charged, swift and silent, across the space that stood between them—rammed his gun into Toby's back.

"Not a move, Toby!" he gritted

tightly.

Toby stiffened and stood still.

Brent frisked him, taking possession of Toby's small automatic. He slipped the gun into his own pocket and stepped around in front of his prisoner. Toby Scott sagged a little when he recognized him.

"Brent! God, I never thought you —"

"Cut out the hogwash, Toby," Brent snapped. "You were expecting me. You were watching for me on orders from your boss."

Toby Scott seemed to go into spasms of fear. "What do you mean—boss? I don't take orders from anybody but myself!"

Nuts. It was on orders of the head man of your blackmail racket that you blasted down Harker." Then, in further inspiration, Brent added grimly. "I saw you duck out right after Georgie was burned down."

"I swear I didn't kill Georgie!"

Brent's voice turned hard. "Talk, Toby. Why did Harker come over to the back room of your store?"

"Seeing you saw me run out, I won't deny I was there when he was shot," Toby said. "I was just ready to go out when he comes in and says, 'Let me use your phone, will you? I was supposed to meet a guy on the corner, but there's a mug prowling this neighborhood who's doing some queer spying.' He says no more except that it was a very private call, so I take the hint and go upstairs. I was up there only about a minute when I hear some banging downstairs—like shots. I got down to the back room to see a guy lamming out into the alley. Georgie was down on the floor, trying to get up. I ran out to stop the guy who shot him, but got scared when I saw you in the alley. I figured you were in the killing too."

"What do you mean too?" barked Brent. "You killed Harker yourself—on orders from your boss, who caught on that Georgie was selling out the girl to me."

"I don't know anything about a girl!" Toby cried frantically. "And I can prove I didn't burn down Georgie! You see, I recognized the guy who had shot Georgie. It was your old pal, Charlie Bowland."

For the second time that night, Tommy Brent lost his head. He swore, "Damn you, you filthy snide! Trying to frame Charlie in this too . . ." and swung the barrel of his revolver at Toby's head.

A TRANSFORMATION came over Toby Scott. He lost his hysteria, moved with rapid purpose. The gun missed his head as he slid sideways, and his fingers caught Brent's forearm in a torturing grip that sent the revolver flying from the police reporter's fingers. In the same instant, Brent went sailing over Toby's shoulder.

Ju-jitsu! Brent realized that the moment Toby's fingers clamped his forearm. The man's hysteria had been faked for the sole purpose of getting Brent to relax and grow careless.

Brent landed in the wet, dripping bushes, crashed down into the soft mud. Cursing, he slithered up to his feet. Toby Scott, by that time, had taken it on the lam and was well on his way to the street.

There was little use trying to catch him, and Brent retrieved his fallen gun. His forearm ached a bit as he thrust the gun back into his pocket. He didn't believe the fairy tale that Charlie Bowland had killed Harker, and he brushed the mud from his rain-damp clothing and walked up to the door of Durant's house.

He thumbed the bell-button again and again. Even kicked at the heavy

door. No response. Despite the lack of lights in the house, he imagined somebody should be inside—at least, the servants. He tried to tell himself that Durant was inside and would not open up to him.

It wasn't until after he had walked down the street to a drugstore and phoned Durant's number that he was convinced that nobody was there at the house. No one answered the phone.

But what if, after all, Durant wasn't this blackmail boss? What if he were the brother-in-law who was supposed to be watched?

Brent felt he had muffed the deal with Toby by working on the murder instead of trying to get out of him where Mara had been taken—that is, if these men had gotten hold of her, as he feared. And after he located a taxi and began riding back toward the Carleton House on the possibility that the girl had returned there, he realized again she was the only person in town who might definitely help him clear himself of Georgie Harker's murder.

THERE was Toby's story, of course, of seeing Charlie running from the murder. But all that, Brent reasoned, was a lie—a stunt to confuse the case in his mind, seeing he had tricked Toby into admitting he had spotted him on the scene of the killing. At least, he knew that Toby was the man he'd have to work on if he didn't locate Mara at the Carleton House.

Then suddenly he remembered the tall man he had run into at the alley passageway. The man had struck him viciously and had fled as though he had been running away from something. That fitted with Toby's story. So could it be the actual truth that the tall man had been the murderer of Harker?

Recollection of how keyed up Charlie Bowland had appeared jolted Brent's brain. And Charlie had been nursing a sore right hand. Could it have been from socking somebody—from striking down Brent after they had collided directly outside of the alley passage?

God knew that it fit. Yet Brent tried to convince himself it was too feeble — a coincidence. Charlie wasn't the type to commit murder. It wasn't beneath him to make love to his best friend's wife, or to chisel liquor money out of a drunk. But murder? No Charlie was too good-natured. To hurt or kill someone was no part of his life.

But granted Charlie had been pressed hard enough . . .? Playing on the fringes of scandal, he would be a ripe victim for blackmail. And if Harker and his pals got the hooks tight in Charlie and Charlie could no longer pay the price they asked.

It was utterly fantastic—too weird for Brent to believe. He wanted more definite proof before he went off on crazy tangets like this.

Yet after he reached the Carleton House, his worry deepened. Neither Charlie Bowland nor Mara Marshall were in their flats. Charlie, of course, had said he was leaving for a week-end. But the fact that the girl was still away strengthened the theory that her enemies had captured her.

BRENT went downstairs to the office-apartment of Manager Endicott. Endicott had just come in, because when he answered his door he was still wearing a rain-speckled raincoat.

Endicott grinned, looking at Brent's wet, mussed clothing. "What's cooking, Tommy? You look like you've been playing tackle on a muddy field."

"I came here to get the raincoat I let Charlie borrow last week," Brent told

him. "Charlie isn't in. I know it's a little irregular, but I wonder—"

"—if you can get into his flat for the coat? Sure. I trust you." Still grinning, Endicott dug out his key ring, selected the right key and handed it to Brent. "Don't forget to bring it back right away."

"You can depend on me. Thanks much," and Tommy Brent headed upstairs again.

After he got up into Charlie Bowland's flat, he made a careful search of it—yet he found nothing of use to him in regard to the murder or the blackmailers. And he found himself wondering if he had been completely crazy, trying to believe the circumstances which painted Charlie as a murderer. He cursed himself for even worrying about it. His job was to prevent himself from being implicated in Georgie Harker's death—not to try and pin the murder on anybody.

And the fact that Mara Marshall wasn't in her flat left him only the alternative he had decided upon earlier. Toby Scott was the man who obviously knew plenty in regard to Harker's death. And the logical place to find him was in his flat above the cigar store.

Brent took possession of one of Charlie's raincoats, then returned the key to Endicott. And when he got outdoors again, he found the street was literally running with water from the now driving rain.

It took a while to locate a cab, and after he did he made fast time. The rain had driven the evening traffic to cover, and it was only a short while until he was back in the vicinity of Toby's cigar store.

The cigar store—the entire building—was dark. The homicide squad had finished their work here and had departed. Out in the street in front, Brent ran into a slickered beat cop making his rounds.

"Hello, Mike," he said. "How did things work out about Georgie Harker?"

"You better keep under cover, Tommy," the cop told him. "Ferguson has the call out for you. It seems a phone operator overheard you talking to Harker before he died—something about you accusing him of harboring a girl. At least, Ferguson thinks it was you."

"Nuts. When I got here Georgie was dead. What about Toby Scott?"

"Toby came here immediately after you left. He gave a solid alibi that he was nowhere near his store all evening, and Inspector Wade let him go. Toby said Harker carried a key to his back room because they ran the poker games together. The key was found in Harker's key-case, all right."

"Sure," muttered Brent, and he walked away. It made him uncomfortable how smoothly Toby had arranged a good alibi for himself. It hinted that the blackmail ring—of which it seemed pretty sure Toby was a part—would take advantage of his blundering upon the scene of Harker's death. The manufacture of a little additional evidence—and with Ferguson eager to push it through—they had a good chance of sinking him for the murder.

HE WORKED his way back to the service alley and discovered that the rear door to Toby's building was locked. Yet it was a simple, old-fashioned common lock, and Brent took out his key ring and tried the skeleton key he habitually carried there. The key did the trick, and he quietly opened the door and entered the back room.

He felt his way through the backroom into the store. He knew where he was going—upstairs to Toby's flat—and if Toby was up there in bed, he'd

get right to work on him. If he wasn't, Brent planned to wait for him. In his mind there was only one way of getting information to clear himself, and that was by hammering it out of Toby. He had no way of knowing if the dope Toby had would help him, but God knew it was worth a try.

He climbed upstairs to a small hall and stood for seconds before the door that led into Toby's flat. Finally he reached out and noiselessly turned the knob. The door was unlocked, and very slowly he pushed it wide. He wanted to be sure he made no mistakes this time.

A trace of cigarette smoke tinged the blackness of the flat. Someone was smoking, or had recently smoked in these rooms. As he tiptoed through the door, Brent slid his gun out of his pocket.

His intent ears heard no sounds—nothing. Beams from the street light came in through the windows, revealing the old-fashioned mission furniture of the dingy, untidy living room. Even in the darkness, the room looked as though it hadn't been cleaned in months.

There was a closed door in the one wall—a door which, he remembered, led to Toby Scott's bedroom. He stepped silently up to it. But the instant he stealthily eased the door open, the muscles of his body tightened. He became aware of deep breathing within the bedroom.

He was sure it was Toby Scott in the bed, sleeping in the security of his bought alibi. It deepened his anger. Fingers tight on his gun, he slid into the room. Gradually his eyes made out the dark shape of a dresser standing against the near wall, and the tall old-fashioned brass bed, with a chair beside it. Carefully, he fingered the wall beside the door, found the light switch and snapped it.

He caught his breath sharply when the light illuminated the sleeper—a girl, her hands and feet tied with ropes to the uprights of the bed ends, and with an adhesive plaster sealing her mouth.

It was Mara Marshall—the girl he had been searching for!

CHAPTER IV

We've Tried Everything

TOMMY BRENT was beside her, shaking her by the shoulder. She did not stir. He shook her again, more determinedly , but still there was no response. It frightened him—but after he caught up one of her wrists and felt the easy, regular throb of her pulse, he realized what was wrong. Mara Marshall had been drugged.

He stood up and looked down at her. She was still wearing her short black Persian lamb, but the coat was winged-back from her curved body, giving full view of the girlish blue print dress she was wearing. Her hat was gone, and her striking deep-red hair hung tousled about her vital oval white face.

Obviously, the blackmailers, getting hold of her at last, had brought her here as soon as the police had left. They had drugged her to save the necessity of watching over her.

Brent didn't try to figure out why the men were holding her. What was important was to get her out of here—to some safe place where he could have a doctor check her over. Drugs, administered by an amateur, sometimes can be dangerous.

He untied the girl's hands and feet from the ropes whch held her to the brass bed. In one sharp motion, he ripped the adhesive from her mouth. Mara did not feel it, and it awoke new worries in his mind. He gathered her in his arms as gently as he could and

carried her out of Toby Scott's flat.

He got out of the darkened building, down to the alley, without mishap. The rain had considerably lessened and now was no more than a drizzle. He began worrying about the beat cop. It wasn't going to be easy avoiding Mike, carrying a girl in his arms.

The way proved to be clear—even after he had gotten through the passageway to Main Street. The street was empty, dark, except for Kruka's drugstore in the middle of the block past Fifth. Brent had known Henry Kruka for years, and he carried the girl to the store.

Henry Kruka was at the point of closing up for the night—tiny, wizened, appearing like a bent, baldheaded boy in the over-size white coat he was wearing. He glanced from the unconscious girl to Brent, blinking his small blue eyes in shocked amazement.

"Tommy—what in the world . . . ?"

"She's out cold—doped, Henry. Is there somewhere here where we can take care of her?"

"Sure. Sure. But where did you find—"

"Never mind," snapped Brent. "We can talk this over after we've tended to the girl. She needs medical attention."

"Old Doc Winter lives in the next block—"

"Get him, by all means. Meanwhile, if you've got an extra bed upstairs . . ."

KRUKA bobbed his head. He locked and darkened the store, then led the way up to his bachelor flat on the second floor. The flat was neat as a pin, and the little druggist fussed and darted around his quarters like an excited bird. He took Brent into his bedroom and rolled the candle-wick spread back, almost with the loving fingers of a housewife.

"Now," he said, after Brent had laid the girl on the bed, "I'll get Doc Winters. I'll be but a moment . . ."

It took more than moments to get the doctor up to the flat. It took twenty minutes, and another ten before the medico finished his examination of Mara.

Doctor Winters was a chubby, white-haired old man, wearing horn-rimmed glasses. When he turned from the bed at last, he said to Brent: "She's been dosed by some powerful sedative. It is difficult to ascertain how long it will be before she wakes."

"Do you think it'd be advisable to get a nurse?" Brent asked.

"Hardly. The dose doesn't appear to be too heavy. All anyone can do is let the girl sleep it off. I suspect she may be coming to in an hour or so."

Brent breathed his relief. He turned to Kruka. "Mind if I use your phone, Henry?"

"Go right ahead," the druggist said eagerly. "There's a phone in the living room."

Brent stepped out to the phone and put a call through to the girl's husband. Though it was around one in the morning, John Marshall answered promptly.

"John," Brent said. "This is Jimmy. I've found Mara. If you'll drive up here right away, you can see her. She's been drugged—but the doctor I called in says she ought to be out of it in a couple of hours."

"Drugged?" Marshall was shocked, incredulous. "Good God, Jimmy—what has she gotten into?"

"I think there's a lot more to her running away to the city than you realize," Brent said grimly. "How long will it take you to get here?"

"Two hours at the most, Jimmy. Where shall I meet you?"

Brent gave him the address of Kru-

ka's store. Then he cradled the phone and turned away.

He went back into the bedroom and said to the doctor, "I think it best you remain here until the girl's husband arrives. He will repay you well. He is a rich man and is very concerned over his wife."

"I'll be glad to remain," Doctor Winters nodded.

Kruka blinked his blue eyes at Brent. "Where to now, Tommy?"

Brent's thin features crinkled into a tight grin. "I'm going out to see a dog about a corpse," he gritted, and went out.

THE moment he hit the street, the grin dropped from his face. It would be a long while before he could talk to Mara, and he wasn't so sure she could help him. There wasn't the time to risk waiting for her story. Lieutenant Ferguson was longing to pounce on him, and these blackmailers were bound to give him his opportunity.

Brent headed back for Toby Scott's cigar store.

The rear door was still unlocked. He wondered if Toby had returned yet and prayed that the man hadn't. It would be easier to work things out if the other members of the blackmail organization were unaware that he had Mara Marshall. Gun in hand, he walked into the darkened back room of the building.

He paused there. Reassured when he heard no sounds, he strode through the store to the stairway. His plan was to wait until Toby arrived, and then he could drag him over to Kruka's flat.

The only danger was that Toby might come with three or four companions. Common sense warned Brent that he should call the police into this. Yet he realized Ferguson might upset all his plans. Ferguson, the beat cop had said, was looking for him at this moment.

After Brent climbed to the hall at the head of the stairway, he stopped dead, staring at the wide open door to the flat. He could hear the brassy voice of Toby Scott talking in low, excited tones inside the living room.

"I tell you—she's gone! Somebody's come up to the bedroom and snatched her . . . Sure . . . We've got to get right at this. There's no time to . . ."

Brent slid up to the open door and looked into the dark living room of the flat. The only light came from the illuminated bedroom, and it splashed on the stocky, curly-headed figure of Toby Scott, who was at a telephone, seated at a table that was set against the living room wall. Toby's back was to Brent.

A swiveling glance about the flat convinced Brent that Toby was alone. With one quick, silent leap, he was behind Toby. He ground the muzzle of his pistol into the cigar storekeeper's broad back.

"Stand stiff, Toby," he whispered. "Finish that conversation naturally and hang up. Remember, I'm not afraid to burn you down."

And then without warning something crashed against Brent's head from out of the darkness. It was a brutal blow that sent him crumpling down . . .

HE IMAGINED that he had been unconscious for only brief seconds, yet it must have been longer than that. His wet raincoat had been stripped off him, and he was supine on the bedroom floor, his arms and legs outstretched. A length of rope was tied to his one wrist, looped tight under the legs of a narrow radiator, while the other end of the rope fastened his other wrist. Each of his ankles was tied to a leg of the foot-end of the old brass bedstead.

Toby Scott was standing over him. So was Endicott. Apparently the sleek blond manager of the Carleton House

was more than merely another sap who had played in those poker games which were regularly held downstairs in the back room.

"You were a fool, Tommy," Endicott grinned. "We heard you coming up the stairs. We knew it wasn't Vinnie, so Toby faked a phone call so I could bat you down without trouble when you jumped him."

Toby swore and shoved Endicott aside. He glared down at Brent. "What did you do with the girl? Where did you take her?"

"He probably worked it with Charlie Bowland, Toby," remarked Endicott. "All along I've felt he's deeper in this than merely working with Georgie to smash us and make a newspaper scoop. Anybody can see he's hooked up with Mara too."

Toby ignored Endicott to snarl thickly at Brent. "What did you do with the girl?" he repeated.

Brent locked intense eyes with Toby, his head throbbing from the blow Endicott had given him.

"Do your damndest, Toby," he said. "I won't trade with you, even if you work on me all night. And if I get out of here alive, God help you."

Toby grinned wolfishly and began the endless business. Taking turns, the two men worked Brent over, both with their feet and fists. They didn't ask questions any more. They pounded Brent without respite.

A FULL hour ground by. They had taken off their coats and were wet with sweat, red-faced from the exertion. It was Endicott's turn now. He was kneeling on Brent's stomach, slamming fists to the reporter's bruised, bloody face. Toby sat in a chair nearby, cursing and rubbing his aching fists.

"You fool, Tommy!" panted Endicott. His greased blond hair was hanging in twin half-circles to his glaring eyes. "Do we have to kill you before you'll talk?"

Brent's breathing was harsh, fast. The fact that Charlie Bowland was working against these men too gave him new hope. He grinned thinly at Endicott.

"Damn you!" Endicott lashed out a fist that snapped Brent's head sideways. Brent didn't turn his head back and lay with closed eyes.

Endicott rose up angrily. "He's given out at last. Damn him, Toby, he's got to talk. It's plain he was in on this match of Mara from here—"

Toby growled. "He's deep in it—the same as Georgie was. I'm sure of that now."

"It's hell you had to kill Georgie."

"What else could I do? We knew he was the guy who swiped those business records from us, and when he barged into my back room tonight, I suspected he had come to start trouble. But all he said was that somebody was tailing him and he wanted to use the phone for a private call. I listened in from the store and heard him call Tommy Brent's hotel. That tipped his hand he was planning to smash us for a paper scoop and was going to swing Brent in to help him. When I came out and told him so, he tried to slug me."

Endicott scowled blackly. "Charlie Bowland must have been tailing him, seeing he popped up at the back door just after you'd burned Georgie down and you were taking over that paper evidence Georgie had on him to show Brent. It's bad enough that Charlie lammed before you could stop him—worse, that I didn't know about this business after he returned to his flat to arrange to go in hiding. What I can't figure out is why he hasn't notified the police by this time. It's un-

natural."

"I think Charlie feels I didn't recognize him, Endicott, and he's biding time till he and Mara can smash our entire setup. We've got to silence him and the gal."

"But how are we going to find him now?"

"I'm sure Brent knows where both Charlie and Mara are. We've softened him up plenty by now. He'll be talking soon enough."

Brent lifted his battered face. He taunted: "What do you mean, Toby, I'm softening up. It'll take more than you two punks to handle me."

Endicott threw up his hands. "God, Toby, I never saw a guy like this! We've tried everything—"

THE telephone rang suddenly in the living room. Toby wiped his forehead on his sleeve and went out to answer it. He said into the phone:

"Yeah, Vinnie . . . Yeah, we've got Brent hog-tight . . . Charlie Bowland? You saw him near here? Good, we'll meet you and help take care of it . . . Nice idea, finishing up everything at West High Road . . . Okay."

Toby returned into the bedroom.

"Did Vinnie say he spotted Charlie near here?" asked Endicott curiously.

"Yeah," said Toby. "And he asks us to help snag him. Then we'll grab the girl. He's also found out where she's hidden."

"Vinnie's been delivering," chuckled Endicott with relief. "What about Brent? Are we going through with the original plan to sink him for Georgie's death?"

"No, we can't chance it now, with all he knows. He goes later—with the others."

"Okay," nodded Endicott. He followed Toby Scott out of the dingy flat . . .

Lying helpless in the bedroom, Brent was past cursing himself for blundering into this. What was important was that both Toby and Endicott had referred to their partner as "Vinnie"—convincing proof that Vincent Durant *did* head this hard, merciless blackmail setup.

Georgie Harker, it seemed, had not been a part of these blackmailers, but had been striving to smash them so he could get a scoop for himself. Charlie Bowland and Mara, on the other hand, were striving to smash these blackmailers for some other personal reason. And Toby Scott had admitted himself that he had shot down Harker.

The way it appeared, Durant had given Toby the order that, if it seemed Harker was becoming dangerous, the columnist should be wiped out. And when Toby obeyed that order tonight and Brent had blundered on the murder scene, Toby had jumped at the opportunity to frame Brent for the crime. But the way things were developing, the ruthless blackmailers had decided against following that up, but planned to mercilessly murder Mara, Charlie, and Brent. It seemed they were willing to kill and kill again to save their well-paying racket.

It irked Brent that he could do nothing to prevent this inhuman massacre. Wildly, he churned his body, tugging at the bonds which restrained him.

And the brass bedstead rolled an inch to a sharp jerk of his legs!

SWIVELING his head up, he saw that the bed was set on casters. It gave birth to desperate hope. He jerked again and again—frantically—knowing that three lives depended upon his getting free. Inch by struggling inch, he pulled the bed toward him—until, at last, the bed was so near

to him that he was able to squirm to a twisted, sitting position, his back against the tall narrow radiator which restrained his wrists.

Then came the chill realization that the effort was getting him nowhere. He could do nothing more—absolutely nothing—the firm way the rope behind the radiator legs held his wrists. He was sunk. Not unless—

That was when he saw the radiator was set well away from the wall. He pressed his shoulders against the sharp edged coils as he forced the radiator back. The floor pipe cracked from the pressure, but he managed to lift the front legs of the radiator from the floor. He got one end of the rope under a raised radiator leg—jerked at it. The rope slipped through with a *snap!*

Swiftly, he did likewise with the other end of the rope. He panted a breath of relief, lifted his body and slid the rope downward underneath him, until he got his hands beneath his thighs. A moment's rest to ease the ache of his arms, then he maneuvered his hands until he got his fingers into his trouser pocket and pulled out the stocky knife he carried on his key-chain. Opening the knife, he made short work of his wrist bonds.

His limbs spread-eagled to the feet of the bed, he had to twist into a painful position to slash at the ropes. But getting one ankle free, the remaining bond was a simple matter. At long last he staggered to his feet and rubbed his aching legs.

It was almost a miracle that he had managed to free himself. Yet he was only thinking of Mara in that moment. He knew he had to get Mara out of peril and into some safe hiding place at once. With this thought burning in his aching brain, he hurried out of the building.

IN LESS than five minutes, he was at Kruka's drugstore on Main Street, running up the rear stairway to the druggist's apartment. More than two hours had elapsed since he had left there, and there was a good chance that Mara had now regained consciousness.

He saw Kruka the minute he stepped into the flat. The little druggist was bending over the tall, aristocratic-looking figure of John Marshall, who sprawled across the sill of the door to the bedroom.

Kruka twisted around, stark fright on his tiny face when he heard Brent's step. He pulled himself erect and clawed excitedly at Brent's arm.

"Tommy!" he blurted. "Heavens Tommy—"

Brent could see into the bedroom from where he stood. The bed was empty. Mara was nowhere in sight.

"Where's the girl?" he demanded harshly.

"She's been kidnapped! It happened only a minute ago! Tommy, two armed men came in—"

"I can see what happened," Brent snarled angrily. He had been too late—too late, only by minutes. Toby and Endicott had the girl again. And this time they would watch over her carefully. They wouldn't give him the ghost of a chance of rescuing her again.

CHAPTER V

Voice in the Dark

BRENT studied John Marshall, who still sprawled unconscious from a nasty bleeding wound on his brow. He whipped his hot gaze back to the druggist.

"Where's Doc Winters, Henry? I thought I told him to hang around."

"Mr. Marshall's doings," Kruka rattled out. "He came in about twenty

minutes ago, and when Winters assured him the girl was all right, he paid the doc off and sent him home. The girl had just opened her eyes when these two gunmen burst in." He wrung his small hands. "Tommy—this girl—this poor girl—"

"For the love of hell, get hold of yourself. Tell me how it happened."

"Mr. Marshall and I were bending over the bed, watching the girl open her eyes, when these men burst in. Mr. Marshall was carrying a revolver in his pocket, but the men brutally struck him down before he could use it. They shoved me aside and carried the girl away."

"You were lucky," Brent told him. "Toby Scott and Endicott aren't usually so easy on people."

Kruka's eyes went wide. "Toby Scott the man who runs that cigar store? Tommy, Toby wasn't one of the men. I recognized the man who slugged Mr. Marshall. You know him too. It was Vincent Durant."

Brent stiffened, his lips clamped tight.

"It's the gospel truth!" Kruka cried excitedly. "I swear it was Durant, Tommy. I didn't recognize the other man. He was tall and lean. . . ."

Brent wasn't listening, his racing brain a merry-go-round of hopeless thoughts. Granted that he did know Durant was the blackmail boss and Toby, Endicott, and this other man were his underlings—and that Toby had shot Georgie Harker. Where was his proof? It almost drove him out of his mind to realize that he had absolutely nothing to back up any accusations he might make to the police. The only hope he had of proving he was innocent of any part of Harker's death—and God only knew what false evidence Toby had already fed to Lieutenant Ferguson—lay in Mara Marshall and what she must know.

Still, it was pretty obvious where Durant must have taken the girl—a place no great distance from Kruka's store. And he turned abruptly and strode back to the exit door of the flat.

"Tommy!" Kruka cried anxiously. "Where are you going now? What should I do about . . ."

Brent paused at the door, his taut eyes burning at the little druggist. "Do what you can for Mr. Marshall, Henry, and tell him to wait here. I'm going out and bring back the girl."

Quickly, then, he left the flat.

AFTER he got down to Main Street, luck played into his hands for once. A lone cab was cruising up the street, and he grabbed it. And it was less than fifteen minutes later that he was over at Vin Durant's place again, striding into the dark, well-tended grounds.

Though it was no longer raining, the air was wet and chill, and the black shapes of trees which loomed about him hung heavy and dripping. The grim stone house itself was unlighted, as cold and dead-looking as some vast, deserted tomb.

This time Brent did not plan to announce himself at the door. An obstinate part of his brain was insisting that Mara had to be inside the house. And the only means of finding out was to break his way inside in order to make sure.

His brain was a turmoil. Why Mara was involved in this vicious business was beyond him, as was the fact that she had become such an enemy of these blackmailers that she was marked for death. Even as Charlie was slated for death—Charlie Bowland who was aiding Mara for some reason, and who had refused to confide in Brent, know-

ing Brent was seeking to return the girl to safety downstate.

From the absolute beginning, the whole case had seemed one long parade of madness. But none of that compared with the new horror that now exploded in Tommy Brent's face.

As he stepped to the drive on his way toward the hulking porte-cochere, he heard a voice, tight and gasping:

"Mara . . . oh, my God, Mara. . . ." And it ended with a queer-sounding, sobbing cough.

He whirled around, fists knotted. All he could see was wet, dripping nothingness about him. He heard no more sounds, but only a stillness which seemed weighted with the menace of death.

A GOOD two minutes he stood with his ears attuned for sounds that did not come. He was unsure whether he had revealed himself or not. It would be foolhardy, he knew, to try and move in any direction.

Then the voice came again, rising from the shrubbery that stood left of the driveway. It was the struggling gasping sob of torturing pain. Whoever was back there seemed desperately injured, but Brent couldn't be sure.

He took a wild chance and made a dive to a thick-boled tree not far away. Nothing happened. And as he hunched there, his body tense, arched for an attack that did not come, the feeling grew on him that there actually *was* a wounded man behind the shrubbery.

He slipped away from the tree and by a wide sweeping route worked his way behind the shrubbery. He stood unbreathing, his mind filled with the memory of how he had once discovered Toby Scott standing watch in almost this same identical place. It made him afraid that this might be some trick.

And in the next moment the headlights of a car, turning the street corner directly beyond the grounds, swept its beams over Brent and the dripping shrubbery before him. In the briefly bright sweep of light he spotted the tall, thin figure of a white-haired man, dressed in a gray striped suit, lying face-down in the wet mud beside the shrubbery. It was Charlie Bowland.

Brent ran forward and dropped to his knees beside him. He rolled him over, fumbled a cigarette lighter out of his pocket and snapped it alight.

Charlie's face was ghastly, his chin red from blood that had dribbled from his mouth. A soggy bullet hole gaped in the fabric of his coat, almost directly above the heart.

"Charlie!" Brent blurted. "God Almighty!"

Charlie was breathing in small gasping breaths that frightened Brent. Yet Charlie seemed to recognize the voice. His lips moved slowly. His words were strained, barely audible now.

"Tommy . . . I knew you'd come through, Tommy. You're decent . . . I told Vin so."

"What happened?" Brent asked thickly.

"Mara! When we brought her here, they had followed us. They've taken Mara and Vin away—away to West High Road. . . ." A choking cough broke off Charlie's voice. "I heard—heard Toby say that as I lay here. Toby thought I was dead. . . ."

His voice turned horribly weak as he struggled on: "God . . . we never thought he—would go in—for murder. We thought we could force him—back to decency. But he's utterly mad . . . a maniac. . . ."

"Who, Charlie?" Brent asked.

"Who?"

"Don't you know, Tommy? Don't you know why Mara ran away here—to the city—" Charlie was caught in another spasm of coughing—a gagging sound horrible to hear. And it broke off when his head suddenly rolled sideways.

Brent shook him. "Charlie! Charlie!"

CHARLIE BOWLAND did not stir. His effort to speak had hastened the end, and now he was dead. He had died without naming his killer.

Or had he . . .? Brent snapped off his flickering lighter and rose slowly, numbly to his feet as the startling, incredible thought swept through him. It seemed too fantastic, too weird to believe. But the facts began falling in place, like the larger, more obvious pieces of an intricate, bloody jigsaw puzzle.

From what Charlie had said, he had been with Vincent Durant when Durant had snatched Mara from Kruka's flat. They had brought the girl here, only to be overtaken by Toby and Endicott. Charlie was shot in the scuffle. Mara and Durant were taken away as prisoners.

Then Vin Durant wasn't the "Vinnie" who was hooked up with Toby and Endicott. Probably he was the man mentioned on that scribbled card Brent had found on Georgie Harker's body—the brother-in-law, the actual head of the blackmail ring wanted watched.

Who, then, *was* this actual blackmail boss?

It became pretty obvious to Brent now that that man was John Marshall. The fact that Charlie and Durant had snatched Mara away from Marshall was proof of that.

Plainly, Mara had discovered her husband was behind a big blackmail setup here in the city and had deserted him, hurrying to Vin Durant, Marshall's brother-in-law, with her discovery. Durant had swung his old friend, Charlie Bowland, into the business, placing Mara into an adjoining flat so Charlie could watch over her. Meanwhile, they were striving to force Marshall out of crime and back to honesty and decency.

The whole thing was so simple it was frightening. Sickening too, considering how Marshall had lost all his self-respect and honor and was willing to kill and kill again to save both his reputation and his nefarious racket. Worst of all, devilish madman he had become, he had every chance of succeeding in this ungodly viciousness. Charlie was dead. Mara and Durant were helpless in his power, because Charlie had said Toby had mentioned they were taking the prisoners to some place on West High Road.

West High Road! A short pavement that ran between a group of small farms just inside the west city limits. The road was less than a half-mile long. There was a slim chance—by a quick, thorough search.

Brent broke into a run toward the street, checked himself and raced back to Charlie. As he had hoped, he found a revolver on the body. He broke it and found six unfired cartridges in the cylinder. Thrusting the weapon into his pocket, he went in wild haste down the concrete driveway on his way out of the grounds.

A sedan swung into the driveway as he reached the street, breaking sharply to avoid striking him. He jerked to a halt, dazzled momentarily by the blinding glare of the headlights.

Someone leaped from the car and rammed a gun into his ribs. A brassy voice grated, "This is as far as you go, Tommy Brent!"

Brent stood stiff. He raised his hands in repressed fury when he saw the unwelcome figure of Detective-Lieutenant Ferguson beside him.

CHAPTER VI

West High Road

BRENT was frantic as Ferguson disarmed him. Despite what he now knew, he still had no tangible proof. The only ones who could save him from whatever case Ferguson was cooking up against him were Mara and Durant, and they would die if he didn't get directly to West High Road.

"For God's sake, don't stop me now," he pleaded. "I've got to get over to the far West Side—fast! Ferguson, there are two people—"

"Can the bushwa. Me and Jake—" Ferguson nodded at the other detective climbing out of the car—"were prowling the neighborhood, looking for you, when we got orders to investigate here. Somebody heard some shots."

"You crazy lout!" cried Brent. "This is a matter of life and death. It'll probably solve Harker's death too. You can come along with me and make the pinch."

"Save your lying breath, murderer," snorted Ferguson. "We're going into the grounds here and look things over. Who knows who else you might have killed? From the way things are stacking up—"

"Stacking up?" yelled Brent—and with an incredibly fast movement, he knocked the gun away from him with his forearm. His left hand locked on the weapon while his right came up fast, an uppercut which drove Ferguson's head back. As Ferguson went crashing down to the walk, Brent quickly spun the gun around in his left hand.

"Hold it, Jake!" he warned. And when the detective stopped with his gun half-drawn: "Drop the rod and kick it away, Jake. I mean what I say."

Jake cursed him, but he dropped his weapon and kicked it out of his own reach.

"Don't move, or so help me I'll give it to you," Brent snapped. Still covering Jake, he slid into the driver's seat of the police car. He backed the car out and sent it roaring down the street.

Jake yelled. He swooped up his gun, fired after the car and missed.

Brent sent the car around the nearby corner in a reckless two-wheeled turn and began heading west. His future—everything—was staked on the one possibility that he could locate the hideaway the blackmailers obviously had on West High Road. If he failed, this incident with the bullheaded, unreasonable Ferguson would sink him, for it was almost a confession that he was deeply involved in Harker's murder. Also in the death of Charlie Bowland.

THE car radio began blaring out police orders. It grated his tight nerves, and he snapped it off. One thing lay in his mind. His ride through to West High Road was going to be a perilous business. Every police car in town would be watching for him.

He rode all the way out to the west end of town without seeing a single prowl car. It was incredible how he'd done it, and he glanced at the dashboard clock. A quarter of four. Almost dawn. Mara and Durant had been prisoners for close to an hour and a half already.

It took less than five minutes to cover the remaining distance to West High Road. He rode the length of the short road, studying the houses—rode back again, almost sobbing in his frustra-

tion. He hadn't seen the smallest trace of a light in any of the houses.

Curses blurted from his lips when it became apparent that Marshall had taken his prisoners elsewhere. And as he hunched in the car at the mouth of West High Road, the wail of a police siren rose suddenly in the distance behind him. The police had scented his trail!

He snapped off the car lights, leaped out and began running wildly down the road. He covered about fifty yards before he realized that running along the road was the worst thing he could do. A thicket stood on the other side of a water-filled drainage ditch on his left, and he leaped over and hid inside the shrubbery.

The black shapes of a house and outbuildings loomed beyond the shrubbery. It offered a temporary refuge from the pursuing police, and he shouldered through the thicket and strode toward the buildings.

He caught his breath sharply after he had advanced some twenty paces. A big old Cadillac was standing in the crush driveway not far from the house. It was Endicott's car—the Cadillac Endicott customarily kept parked in front of the Carleton House—and the astonishing truth thrust itself through Brent's startled brain. This darkened house was the very one he had been seeking. Incredibly, Fate had led him straight to the place where Mara and Vin Durant had been taken!

Whipping out the gun he had taken from Ferguson, he began moving forward cautiously. And when he drew abreast of the Cadillac, he caught sight of Endicott.

A sleek, expensive-looking coupe was parked in front of the Cadillac, and Endicott was leaning, half-sitting on the front right fender. That he had been posted as a guard was obvious.

Brent stood unbreathing in fear that he would betray himself. Distantly, that siren wailed again, but he was deaf to it. Crouching down, he crept beyond the coupe till he was beside its heavy front bumper. Rising swiftly, he flung himself toward Endicott.

ENDICOTT had turned his head in Brent's direction, as though some vague instinct had warned him of danger. He let out a yelp, sprang back, digging at his hip.

Brent came in too fast, his weapon swinging through the darkness. It caught Endicott on the side of the head, sending him down. He rolled over on his back and lay unmoving.

A glance at the house showed Brent a small crack of light shining weakly through the cracks of one of the heavily-shuttered windows. Though he had no way of knowing how many men might be inside the house, he was past worrying about it. He gagged Endicott with a handkerchief, used the man's belt and shoe strings to tie him securely, and then shoved him into the coupe.

Finally he started grimly toward the house. It was all or nothing now. And in his taut brain rose the picture of how mercilessly both Charlie Bowland and Georgie Harker had died.

A complete circuit of the rambling frame farmhouse revealed no means of getting safely and secretly inside. But when he tried the cellar door, he thrilled to find it unlocked. Quietly, gently, he shoved it wide open.

Four wooden stairs led down from the door, and there was the vague suggestion of light down in the cellar. He descended the stairs, which led to a door opening to the main part of the cellar.

The light was coming from the opened door to a section of the cellar

which had been boarded up. He could see nothing inside the room from where he stood, but he could hear the sound of movement there. And he heard the soft, pitiful sobbing of a woman.

Mara was inside there—still alive!

His eyes turned harsh and hot, and with his gun poised before him, he crept noiselessly forward. He paused beside the open door, his lean body in a half-crouch as he peered into the room.

FOUR people were inside the room, two of them seated stiffly in old arm-chairs. One of the latter was Mara, her face white beneath her tousled red hair. Fear and horror, it seemed, had swept away all the after-effects of being drugged.

The man in the chair beside her was small, baldheaded, benevolent - appearing, dressed in a tuxedo. It was Vin Durant. His little hands tightly gripped the arms of his chair as he stared hollow-eyed at Toby Scott and his companion.

Toby Scott was uncoiling a long length of rope. A wide-shouldered, swarthy Italian was next to him, covering the prisoners with a heavy automatic. Brent recognized the Italian—Tomaso Vinarso, ex-convict, and a familiar figure in the daily police lineup. This probably was the "Vinnie" who had phoned Toby's flat.

"Take it easy, Durant," Toby suddenly said. "You're only going to be tied up here with Mara umtil we can locate Tommy Brent and bring him over."

"You fellows aren't going to get away with this madness," Durant protested in horror.

"Nuts," grinned Toby. "Who's to stop us? Nobody knows about our place here and—"

Brent spoke then, his voice dangerous and soft:

"Hold it still, Toby—or I'll come in shooting!"

Toby and Vinarso whirled toward the door—stopped dead, undecided, at the threat of the gun in Brent's steady hand.

"Drop that gat, Vinarso! I'll slap a slug between your eyes before you make another move as sure as God made little apples."

Vinarso swore in Italian as the heavy automatic slipped down out of his unwilling fingers.

Durant leaped up and slammed a hard fist into Toby's face, knocking him down. He cried, "That's for shooting Charlie without giving him a fighting chance!"

Mara ran over to Brent, sobbing in joy at this sudden release from this hopelessness.

In this flurry of excitement, Brent temporarily forgot the precaution he'd meant to take. It had been his plan to place Durant in charge of Toby and Vinarso while he went upstairs to account for that lighted room he had seen.

His utter folly sickened him, because in the next moment a gun muzzle was grinding into the small of his back. A voice warned from behind him: "You're through, Tommy. I think you had better drop your gun."

Mara had fallen back from him, wide-eyed in terror, her palms pressed to her white cheeks. He could see Durant standing rigid in angry defeat, glaring at the man just outside the door.

Brent dropped his gun and stepped deeper into the room. Then he turned to face John Marshall—a tall, heavy-set man, dressed in tailored tweeds. The wound on Marshall's high forehead from where Durant had struck him at Kruka's flat, gleamed redly against his white, tight-drawn face.

CHAPTER VII

Frenzy of Fear

"FORTUNATELY none of you realized I was in my study upstairs," Marshall said in a calm, even voice. "I'm glad you've broken in this way, Tommy. It saves my boys the trouble of going out to find you. I'm sorry this had to happen, Tommy. I've always liked you—just like I've always liked Durant and Mara. You three have brought this on yourselves."

Brent said nothing. He still could hardly believe anything like this of his old friend, Marshall.

"Let me at Durant!" raged Toby, his face livid as he climbed up from the floor. "I'll bust every bone in his dirty little body!"

"You'll have your revenge soon enough," Marshall told him sharply. "Calm down."

"John! John, I'm your wife," pleaded Mara. But Marshall unfeelingly thrust her aside and turned grimly upon Vincent Durant.

"This is not my fault," he said. "When Mara ran away from the farm, I thought it was as her farewell note had said—which is why I asked Tommy to help find her. Later, I learned my personal files had been tampered with and certain very revealing papers had been taken. I knew then that she had snooped and found out what I actually was and intended to turn me over to the police as a common criminal. You might call her a redheaded murder maker herself. If she had stood by me like a good wife would, none of this would be happening now."

"John! *John!*" Maria cried desperately.

He merely nodded his men out of the room.

"We'll leave them locked up here until I decide how best to handle the situation," he told them. The door closed behind the three men as they departed.

Brent ran to the door, tried it. It was locked. He turned and surveyed the prison room. It had once been a laundry; stationary tubs stood along one wall, next to an old three-burner gas stove. There wasn't the smallest chance of escaping from the place.

MARA, meeting the look of Brent's eyes, dropped into a chair—hopeless, frightened, stunned.

"I realize now that you're Marshall's brother-in-law by one of his former marriages," Brent said to Durant. "I'd like to hear the rest now."

Durant scowled darkly. "Georgie Harker got the first clue to it; a gossip columnist was bound to get wind that a lot of people in town were being blackmailed. And I believe he originally felt that I knew Marshall is behind it, because he made veiled remarks to me which roused my suspicions. I made a visit down to Marshall's farm and told Mara about it, asking her to find out what new business Marshall was in. It was the following week she fled here. She had those revealing documents with her. She originally hoped that Marshall loved her enough that he'd give up this criminal stuff to get her back."

"John's fortune had been wrapped up in the Far East," Mara said desperately, "and when the Japs began their operations in the Pacific, it sent everything crashing. He was a hard loser and began brooding, practically losing faith in the world itself. Then he began making big money suddenly—a new job, he called it. I didn't know until I saw those papers that he's blackmailing people who believe he is their friend. I'm sure he's gone mad."

"It's an almost fantastic setup he

has," explained Durant. "He has enough friends among our town's fast set to know who are ripe for a shakedown. He fakes awkward situations for these people, being pen-and-ink artist enough to forge damning letters and documents which back up the manufactured situations. His victims daren't risk the publicity of trying to disprove the forgeries, and they're all wealthy enough to be glad to pay off to Toby and Vinarso, who're handling the shakedown angle . . . And after Mara came to me, I hid her under an assumed name in a flat adjoining Charlie's. When Mara's original plan didn't move Marshall, we decided to get him under the same kind of pressure he gets on his victims. We hoped to force him to quit this racket, believing he would ultimately see he had been playing the part of a fool."

"There wasn't that kind of evidence at the farm, and it convinced us John has some headquarters here in town," spoke Mara. "We swung Georgie Harker in, hoping he could help us. Charlie didn't trust him."

Brent nodded. "Charlie was right. Harker was hoping that he and I could split the case wide open, getting a scoop, publicity, and a big bonus with our story. That's why he asked me to meet him at Fifth and Main tonight."

MARA gasped. "It was *you* on that corner!"

"What were you doing there, Mara?"

"Charlie felt Harker was going to doublecross us, and we were following him in a car. After he got out of a cab near the corner, Charlie trailed him on foot. Charlie was gone so long, I started looking for him. You frightened me and I ran into that alley and hid—just as Charlie fled toward the passage with Toby chasing him. Toby hid when you came running on the scene. He ducked away after you entered his back room. And seeing you go in there made me sure you were in with John too—as Vin and Charlie suspected, because John had you searching for me."

Brent frowned. "That doesn't make sense. After suspecting me of being an enemy, why did you leave a note on my hotel room door, asking for my help?"

"I thought you'd kidnap me and take me to the headquarters we were looking for, and Charlie and Vin could follow us there. I was sure John wouldn't hurt me. But Toby had seen me on Main Street, trailed after me and captured me as I came out of your hotel. He took me to Endicott's apartment at the Carleton House. Endicott was astonished, learning I was Lorna Johns. They doped me, and I didn't know any more till I woke up in that druggist's flat, and Vin and Charlie were rescuing me from John."

Brent's taut eyes swung to Durant. "How come you located Mara there?"

"It was a lucky fluke," muttered Durant. "Charlie was convinced Mara had been snatched. He got in touch with me and we searched for her. We finally headed for Toby's, hoping he'd lead us to Mara. And as we reached Main Street, we saw Marshall himself drive up to Kruka's drugstore—which was proof she was being held there. We were convinced then that this was Marshall's secret headquarters. So first we snatched Mara and took her to my place. We were unaware Vinarso had been tailing us all the while. He, Toby, and Endicott trapped us there, and Charlie was shot in the scuffle . . . and we were taken here to this house.

"Like a damn fool I didn't realize Marshall had come here from Kruka's and was upstairs," concluded Durant. "I should have warned you. I don't

know how you fit in this business, but tell me—does anybody else know you're here? Has anybody been working on this with you?"

Brent shook his head grimly. "I tried to suggest it to a couple of cops, but they wouldn't listen. No one knows I'm here, so it looks as though we've got to fight this out alone. We—"

THE door to the room abruptly swung open as Marshall and his two companions entered again. Marshall and Vinarso were gripping guns. Toby, however, was carrying a coil of rope.

"A very enlightening conversation," Marshall remarked. "I was sure you three would talk this over if I left you alone. It is gratifying, Tommy, to learn you did not take anyone else into your confidence. Only Durant can't fool me that he doesn't know how you fit in this. When Toby was watching Durant's house, convinced that Charlie Bowland would come there, you jumped him suddenly. That's irrefutable proof that you have been working with Mara and Durant all the while."

Brent stared at him stonily. "I've long considered you my friend, Marshall. I knew the day would come when you would go utterly mad."

"Mad?" spat out Marshall with deep rancor. "You call me mad that I should get back from this crazy world what it has taken from me? The only way a man can exist these days is by ruling his existence with an iron hand. I've discovered a method to get the money to live in the comfortable style I'm accustomed. No one—friend or foe—is going to stand in my way. Understand?"

"I didn't mean that you are actually insane," Brent answered coldly. You're a man who worships your smug respectability and will go to any means to save your face and reputation. I've been police reporter long enough to know that most brutal crimes are born of this inordinate desire to preserve respectability. And you intend to commit wholesale murder, merely that you fear exposure. God, Marshall, you're low. You haven't got the guts to face a short prison term for blackmail, but rather would kill your dearest friends to avoid it!"

Desperately, Brent was trying to shame Marshall into the realization of the mad course he was choosing. But it had no effect on Marshall. The man merely smiled thinly.

"Damn you, Marshall!" exploded Durant. "Why don't you shoot us down? That's what you intend to do, isn't it?"

Marshall shook his head. "Vin, I suggest that you, Mara, and Tommy seat yourself. Toby is going to tie all of you up securely before we open the jets of that gas-burner over there beside the stationary tubs."

"John! John!" Mara clawed at him. She was frenzied now in the grip of awful, complete fear. "Vin and I didn't intend to turn you over to the police—don't you understand? We were merely—"

MARSHALL flung her aside unfeelingly. He sent her sobbing, stumbling down to the floor.

"John, try and get a grip on yourself," Brent said in a subdued, reproving voice to Marshall. "You know that anything like this will only end in the electric chair. Such useless, wholesale murder—"

"I'm willing to take the chance," snapped Marshall. "Get down to business, Toby."

Sweat stood out on Brent's forehead. He had tried to shame Marshall to reason and had failed. And when he saw how closely he, Durant, and Mara,

were covered with the guns, he realized none of them was going to get a break.

Toby shoved Brent into a chair, twisted the end of the rope around the reporter's wrist and began binding the wrist to the chair arm. As Toby bent to this task, Brent saw he was wearing a gun in a shoulder holster under his coat.

Brent saw his play. His free hand caught the gun by the butt, and he dragged it upward, viciously. The muzzle gouged a furrow across Toby's startled face, from the chin across his nose and brow.

Toby shrieked, clawing at his tortured face. Vinarso fired excitedly at Brent—missed. And Brent shot the Italian squarely between the eyes.

Marshall fired point-blank — but Brent had ripped his half-bound wrist free and was lunging toward him, with Toby Scott gripped fast and helpless against him like a shield. In blind fury, Marshall fired again and again.

Toby's defenseless body jerked from the impact of the slugs that drove into his body. Brent stumbled down from the weight of Toby's lifeless body, fighting desperately to get clear and into a firing position before one of Marshall's bullets crashed into him.

And on the flaming crest of that horrible moment, the cellar room about him suddenly seemed filled with moving feet. There was the blue of police uniforms. And Brent had a fleeting glimpse of the grim figure of Detective-Lieutenant Ferguson.

John Marshall—mad with the fear that he would be ignobly exposed as a common criminal—seemed to lose his head completely. With a sobbing gasp of defeat, he tried to fire at the officers. And their answering volley literally blasted him off his feet.

Ferguson stamped angrily over to Brent and twisted the gun out of the police reporter's fingers. His heavy-lidded eyes were burning with anger.

"Well," he barked, "what have you got to say for yourself? There are two murders on your neck now."

IT WAS the first time since Brent had known him that Ferguson actually was a welcome sight. He grinned and said, "My God. How did you manage to catch up to me?"

"You said you were heading for the West Side, didn't you? The car I called from headquarters for me got into this vicinity when the radio announced that a prowl car had spotted you turning into West High Road."

"It took more than that, Ferguson."

"Sure. There's a guy tied up in a coupe outside. He was flashing the car lights on and off to attract attention. We came over here to investigate when this war broke out in the cellar."

"I tied Endicott up," Brent told him. "He probably was trying to attract the attention of Marshall inside the house. Thank the Lord for that."

"Who's Marshall?" stormed Ferguson. "What in holy hell's been going on here, anyhow?"

"I can tell you that, officer," Vin Durant said, stepping up. In swift, terse fashion he related the complete, fantastic story, ending, "Toby Scott's gun—the one you took from Brent—will account for the bullets in Harker's and Charlie Bowland's bodies. And there's probably a lot of evidence about the blackmail setup in Marshall's study upstairs."

"Well, what do you know," exclaimed the astonished lieutenant. "Well, what—do—you—know!" He caught himself and spun angrily at Brent. "All this isn't going to help you, Mister. You didn't think we'd be smart enough to trail you out here.

Stealing a police car and striking an officer are serious offenses in this man's town."

"Wait, Ferguson," said Brent. "I know you hate my guts, but let's say that's all under the bridge. This is a big scoop for me. And when I file this story at my paper, don't forget how I always give the police department a big splash. You're heading the cops here, don't forget."

Ferguson stared at him a long minute. Finally he scratched his fleshy ear and grinned. It was very obvious that he was thinking of his name and picture being plastered over the morning extras.

"Damned if I didn't get this wrong," he chuckled. "It's all a big misunderstanding, my boy. You borrowed my car with my permission—now didn't you, Tommy?"

"Sure. Sure," said Brent, and turned away. And he saw Mara Marshall staring at him, white-faced, stricken, helpless. He walked over to her.

"Mara," he said, his voice oddly gentle. "Keep your chin up, Mara. John was my friend too, remember."

She broke down then, burying her red head into the hollow of his skinny shoulder. It was like the old days, when they had been kids together. Those times, then, when she had had her little troubles, he had been like an older brother to her.

"Tommy!" she sobbed. "Oh, God in heaven, Tommy. . . ."

MATHEMATICAL MAGIC

A MATHEMATICIAN is an adventurer who dives into the world of the unknown, balances and juggles abstract quantities, and many times is able to note the presence of scientific phenomena which have escaped the probing eyes and microscopes of scientists for centuries. Yes, a mathematician is a virtual Houdini; he pulls rabbits out of hats for our great men of the laboratory.

The practical man is not apt to value the place of the mathematician in science. The great Edison, and even Faraday, were loud in their insults toward pencil-and-paper research. The pure mathematician is always thought of as the cold intellectual, a stuffy sort of fellow, who considers the juggling of numbers and symbols more important than the control of the forces that regulate the earth's motion or produce the raw materials on her surface. Whoever carries that idea is wrong. Faraday found himself eating his own words a few years after he made this statement:

"I do not perceive that a mathematical mind, simply as such, has any advantage over an equally acute mind not mathematical. . . . It could not of itself discover dynamical electricity not electro-magnetism, not even magneto-electricity, or even suggest them."

A mathematician named Maxwell was needed to develop Faraday's theories so that they could be used. For although Faraday's brilliant experiments with electricity and magnetism led him to propose the theory of the electromagnetic field, they were not able to suggest, and his non-mathematical mind was not able to formulate, the full implications of his theory. James Clark Maxwell had the ability to convert Faraday's vague idea of lines and tubes of force extending through space, translate the basic assumptions into mathematical terms, and then by a process of pure logic project the known into the possible. Maxwell, utilizing Faraday's principles, predicted the phenomenon of radio waves.

Maxwell was positive that radio waves existed and said so. He was staunch in this belief because his equations had revealed them on paper.

A short time after Maxwell publicized his findings, a famous physicist, Heinrich Hertz, proved to all the world that what had been discovered with a paper and pencil was real and also usable. The setting up of a mechanism known as the spark-gap apparatus in the laboratory demonstrated for Hertz that radio waves did exist.

The findings of Maxwell and Hertz furnished the groundwork from which Marconi began to assemble his own theories. He put them into practical form by evolving a system of radio communication—sending messages which were called marconigrams.

Thus radio was heralded into the world by the discovery of the existence of radio waves from the numbers and calculations appearing on a mathematicians piece of paper. Aided by a physicist and disciplined to useful service by engineering, these findings resulted in the radio. Our real debt for the invention of the radio and all its later applications belongs to mathematics, the tool that made man first aware of the presence of those magic waves.—*Carter T. Wainwright*

I KNOW A THOUSAND

By 63511
Ohio Penitentiary

Maybe it might pay you to take a tip about burglars and how they operate from a man who certainly should know!

"THERE ain't no honor among thieves," laments Jimmy the Peteman, as he berates himself for trusting the "shifter" who "fingered" him. Jimmy knows, belatedly, that in almost every case the shifter, or go-between who transfers loot from cook to fence, will squeal in order to get off with a lighter sentence for himself.

Jimmy has the reputation of being one of the best petemen in the country. That is, when he is outside. At present Jimmy is doing a bit for a job in Cleveland, for which he was caught while unloading the remains of the loot through a shifter.

Jimmy works with two other men, one of whom acts as the spotter. The spotter has a good front and it is his job to find a likely prospect and "case" it. Posing as a city building inspector, telephone repairman, or solicitor, the spotter visits various business places, keeps his eyes and ears open, then reports to Jimmy whenever he spots a good layout.

Then Jimmy and his helper, "Nitro," take over. If the job is an important one with a probable big score, they case it further, spending as much time as necessary to get a thorough plan of the layout. Finally they are all set. They place their "keister" carefully in the car —it contains caps, fuses, nitro-glycerin, crowbar, jimmy, hatchet, chisel, screwdrivers, rope, wire, a small acetylene cutting torch, drill, and various other tools—then drive to the place.

It's 3 A.M. when they arrive—the favorite hour for burglars. The job the spotter has lined up is a four story department store with an alley running alongside; on the third floor is supposed to be a safe containing between $8,000 and $10,000 in cash, besides other valuables. They also know, through the spotter, that there are electric alarms on the entrance doors and windows and they figure there will be one on the skylight. There will be no watchman to contend with.

They run the roads. No cruising police cars. No stray pedestrians. The cop on the beat won't be along for another twenty minutes. They park the car, duck into the alley, pull themselves up a rain spout then swing to the fire escape. They avoid the lower end of the fire escape because they know it is "bugged" and will go off if it is pulled down. In three minutes Jimmy and Nitro are on the roof of the building.

After cutting a hole through the roof, they lower themselves into the store. Jimmy looks carefully about for one of the tricky photo-electric beams which had cost them a previous jail term. They know that "black light" is almost invisible until you come into its direct

BURGLARS



ILLUSTRATED BY MALCOLM SMITH

ray: then the beam is broken and the alarm goes off.

Satisfied that there is no electric eye in the place, they hurry downstairs and make their way into the office where the safe is located. They open their kit, almost leisurely, and appraise the square dark object. They look close to make sure there is no "rat trap" around the safe—a contraption filled with thousands of tiny copper wires that send an alarm if broken or displaced a few inches.

JIMMY runs his glove hand over the combination lock of the door. He isn't naive enough to think he could feel out the combination like the fictional Jimmy Valentine. Locks haven't been made for a long time that can be worked by feel, no matter if a fellow sandpapers all the skin off his finger tips to make them sensitive.

Not a bad safe, they decide. Might take all of ten minutes to open with the drill and nitroglycerin. Rigging up the drill, they are soon busy cutting a small hole through the steel above the combination. In several minutes they are through the steel. Then they place their charge of "soup." They plug up all the holes and throw several blankets, which they had picked up on the fourth floor, over the safe to deaden the noise. The charge they are using is known as a "jam shot" a shot powerful enough to blow the door off. They stretch out the wire leading to the charge until they are a safe distance away from the "pete." Then Jimmy touches the ends of the wires against the pole of a small flashlight battery. A second later there is a muffled *puff* and the safe door swings crazily on its hinges. It is a neat job, one they can be proud of. They clean out the cash and a large case of jewelry, step out on the fire escape and dash down to the car: remembering, of course, the bugged lower end of the fire escape and avoiding it. They leave their valuable tools behind—as they always do whenever they make a big score.

They make their getaway over the previously planned route directly to their plant where the spotter is waiting for his cut. They divide the loot carefully, giving the spotter his customary ten percent cut.

They remain in their hideout until the heat dies down, then Jimmy and Nitro visit a "pigeon joint"—a store that supplies burglar tools—where they purchase another complete set of tools in preparation for their next job.

Would you believe your property to be safe from burglars if it was supposedly securely locked and guarded by

three trained watchdogs as an added precaution? If so, observe the following tale told to me by a confirmed burglar serving thirty years for his latest brush with the law.

Second-story Sam is an old and cunning master in the gentle art of cracking a joint. He started as a juvenile delinquent and if it hadn't been made so easy for him perhaps he wouldn't have been successful in getting into many of the establishments he burglarized. His experiences are many and varied and he has a long prowler's pedigree. Of all the tales he has told, I think the most interesting is the one of the three dogs.

It seems that one evening Sam got a hot tip on a home in the suburbs of a well-to-do neighborhood, the tipster telling him that this job would be a "cold slough"—a residence where the inhabitants are absent. Not one to let opportunity slip through his fingers, Second-story Sam immediately got on the job and drove out to case the place.

First he ran the roads, and finding everything clear, he parked the car a short distance from the residence and proceeded cautiously on foot. The finger had told him he could expect to score for considerable loot on this job, so Sam wasn't going to crumb the deal by any carelessness in giving the "panny" (residence) the double O.

It was a moonless night, ideal for a prowler. As Sam approached the dwelling with its spacious grounds, he kept a sharp lookout for a "bugster"—watchman. The nearest dwelling was at least a quarter-mile away and Sam knew that in such well-to-do isolated sections the owners usually hired a watchman to guard the property in their absence. Therefore, Second-story was somewhat surprised when there was no bugster to be seen.

"EVERYTHING seems to be jake," Sam muttered to himself as he carefully cased the surrounding grounds. But he soon learned that this assumption was a bit premature. Cautiously working his way into the grounds he stopped when within a short distance of the building, observing it closely.

Then he got the scare of his life.

Out of nowhere, it seemed, an obscure, snarling body came hurtling out of the darkness straight at his throat. Sam stood petrified. But only for a second. With a quick twist he flung himself into the shrubbery on the side. Then regaining his feet he scampered towards the street, with not one but now three huge, vicious police dogs yelping madly at his heels.

After gaining a safe distance he stopped and reflected. So that's why they didn't have a bugster guarding the joint!

This was no new occurrence in Sam's long and precarious career, but previously he always knew beforehand if any dogs were guarding the premises and had never gotten such a scare before.

This didn't discourage him. He had a remedy for such a situation. However he silently cursed the finger for neglecting to warn him about the dogs as this would necessitate a trip back into town for some "bait."

AFTER making a fast trip to town, Sam was back shortly, this time parking the car in the driveway leading to the house. Stashing his keister in the weeds near the car, he again approached the building with a small package tucked under his arm. He smiled confidently, knowing very well what was about to happen. For Sam had discovered early in his career that dogs, especially police dogs, had an overwhelming

craving for "Aunt Jenny's Brandy Fruit Cake!"

Thereupon, Sam whistled gleefully for the dogs and as they came tearing in his direction he threw several small pieces of the fruit cake toward them. One of the dogs stopped, sniffed the cake, then gulped it hungrily down. The others, apparently afraid that they were missing something, began sniffing around and soon there was a mad scramble among them for the remaining pieces.

Sam headed for the car leaving a trail of fruit cake in his wake with the dogs following and eagerly snapping up the pieces. Soon they were at the car. Opening the front and rear doors of the sedan Sam dropped several crumbs on the running board. With his front paws on the running board one of the dogs devoured the crumbs then looked inquisitively into the car at Sam who was spreading more crumbs on the car seats.

After a bit of hesitation one of the dogs jumped into the car; then the others quickly followed suit. Sam felt that these quarters were a bit cramped, so leaving the fruit cake for the dogs he squirmed his way out and slammed both doors shut. The windows were open only enough to allow air to circulate.

Thus Sam was left free to concentrate on the job at hand—which was mere routine from here on. He had to work fast before the dogs started howling again. Retrieving his keister he quickly made his way to the rear of the house.

SAM always liked to work on the second-story windows because he knew people seldom locked them, thinking the height made entry impossible. Before proceeding any farther Sam slipped on his gloves. He was too hep to leave any calling cards behind.

With his keister strapped to his back, Sam nimbly shinnied up the drain pipe and onto the porch-roof. Burglars hate unnecessary noise, and Sam was grateful for the thoughtlessness of the owner when the first window he tried was unlocked; in a moment he was inside a luxuriously furnished bedroom. It was amazing, thought Sam, as he rooted through dresser drawers, how careless some people were with their property. Valuables were strewn haphazardly throughout the compartments. The closet disclosed furs and other expensive clothing.

Sam knew that the heavy stuff was downstairs in the safe. So, after cleaning up the light stuff on the upper story, he hurried below. The safe turned out to be a can which could be opened with a "come-along," or puller—a special tool used by burglars for pulling out safe combinations. In a few minutes Sam had the combination off. He inserted a long-handled tool for setting back the tumblers. In another minute Sam was cleaning out the interior of the safe, which turned out to be a hot one just as the finger had told him.

The dogs were becoming restless and he could hear them yapping outside in the car. Very shortly he was outside, released the dogs and made his getaway.

The loot turned out to be $15,000 in cracked ice and cash. Sam turned the ice over to the shifter who sold it at one-third its value. Deducting ten percent for the finger's end, it left Sam a tidy sum for his evening's work.

Sam was later apprehended for this job when the shifter was nabbed while transferring some hot stuff, turned stoolie and fingered Sam.

Moral of this story is: Don't make it easy for the burglar. If you leave your home for any length of time, keep all the windows locked—especially the upper-story ones. Place expensive jew-

elry and other valuables in a safe-deposit vault. While watchdogs are okay, don't rely too much on them; they can be bribed!

THE foregoing yarns illustrate how the big time burglars operate. But there are many varieties of burglars: one type being the sneak thieves, who require only a minute or so while your back is turned, to lift your purse or rings which you so carelessly leave on the table.

Sneak thieves usually operate in pairs. They ring your doorbell and ask to come in: some as gas inspectors who send you downstairs to turn on the hot water while they help themselves.

In the Southwest, a man appeared at a back door soon after the children had been sent to school.

"I'm from the gas company. May I look over your water heater?"

Because he had on a uniform, the lady let him in. He began to poke around the heater. The bell of the front door rang and she went to speak to a polite man who said he was looking for a family named Cooper. He kept her at the door for a few minutes, thanked her and left. The gas man was just wiping his hands. "Everything will be all right now," he said.

A few minutes later the woman looked in her purse which she had left on the kitchen cabinet and found it empty. The rings she had put on the window sill were gone also.

Midnight burglars are silent as cats and just as agile. They are known as "cat men" to the police. They shinny up poles and trellises, and they're adept at getting from fire escapes to windows, often along dizzy ledges. To leave a ladder in the yard is just asking for trouble.

No window is too high for them and even skyscraper windows should be kept locked.

The greatest single factor contributing to the large number of burglaries committed each day is the negligence of property owners in locking and safeguarding their properties.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is an old adage especially worthy of consideration today, with transgressions of the law by juveniles on the ascent throughout the nation. With welfare agencies pulling their hair in an effort to curb the rise, it would seem logical to try to prevent some of these crimes by preventive measures, such as the one I read in a local newspaper a couple of months ago.

Seven boys burglarized the home of a well-to-do Die and Tool company owner in a large city of the Central States.

The boys, all of juvenile age, entered the house through a basement window which was supposed to be locked. No one being home, the boys took their time and ripped the wall safe from the wall and hauled to a nearby field in a car they had another boy help them steal, giving him $1.50 for his share of the loot. Disposing of the car, they took a pickaxe and bursted open the safe, which contained $28,000 an incredible amount to leave in a cheap wall safe. Evidently this was more money than the boys knew what to do with, so they left half of it in the owner's garage, only to return for it later.

One of the youths, picked up in another state with only $585.00 on him, told police he had spent nearly $6,000 in less than a month. He said he spent over $500.00 for War Bonds and the rest buying clothes, guns, and showing the girls a good time.

Another one of the boys, when picked up, said he gave a taxi driver $47.50 tip on a $2.50 trip.

The boy who received only $1.50 for helping steal the car, was sentenced to

a boys' farm, while the others were under sentence at the Boys' Industrial School.

I HAVE lived and associated with burglars for over a decade and I hope my article has served the purpose of acquainting the public with the various methods used by burglars in gaining entrance into establishments and how they dispose of the loot, etc.

It is said that an army of 500,000 criminals is at large in the United States today. They commit 1,000,000 crimes each year which costs the nation billions of dollars. The Department of Justice reports that a serious crime is committed in the United States every twenty-one seconds of each hour every day of the year. A burglary takes place every one and two-thirds minutes, the average loot being worth $59.19.

This year, figures on crime are increasing tremendously.

Almost every large city has its lawbreakers. Who's to blame? Some persons blame press publicity. They believe that newspapers and magazines should play down stories and pictures that deal with crime. Each new story, they say, leads others to follow suit. Radio and movies, too, have come in for their share of criticism. Lurid films and exciting radio dramas have influenced impressionable young minds, critics claim.

These charges, sociologists reply, are only partially true. Press, radio and films may be responsible in some instances, but their sin is slight compared to the guilt of irresponsible parents, bad companions, poor housing, lack of proper school training and unusual wartime conditions.

I have known convicted criminals of all types for years and have yet to find one who blames his start in crime on a movie he saw or a magazine he read. In almost every case its the same old story: disunity in the home which drives the boy out on the streets where he unites with others in the same plight. Then come a series of petty thefts, increasing in seriousness until ultimately the boy ends up in a penitentiary. I know, for I started the same way.

QUISLING RACKET

ACCORDING to Chester A. Bowles, Administrator of OPA, the distribution of counterfeit and stolen gasoline rations coupons has become one of the most profitable rackets in America. A man can carry as much pay-cargo in a satchel as the prohibition era gangs could transport in several trucks. OPA has set up a special machinery to deal with this racket, including enforcement officers organized with the advice of the U.S. Secret Service and backed with all the resources of that agency. However, the flow of gasoline into the black market cannot be controlled effectively without the full cooperation of the American motorist. "The simple fact," Mr. Bowles says, "is that there would be no black market in gasoline if every motorist bought gasoline only with coupons issued to him by his ration board, and if he endorsed his coupons as soon as the board issued them."

Gasoline is vitally needed not only for military operations aboard which day by day are increasing in magnitude, but also for farm tractors and other war-essential transportation needs without which our fighting forces would be hamstrung. In this connection, an extract from a recent broadcast by Mr. Bowles is of interest, or should be, to every American.

"Earlier today, I was asked a rather startling question: 'Have you any evidence that the counterfeiting and sale of ration stamps and coupons is being carried on in this country by German agents?' To that question I can only answer this. Our enemies know only too well how much activity might confuse and demoralize our people. A long list of German works on psychological warfare, such as Colonel Blau's famous secret propaganda textbook, makes this only too clear. So does the German shortwave radio which often urges and instructs Americans on how to beat the rationing and price control laws. Draw your own conclusions. I can only say that an American who buys any coupons, counterfeit or legitimate, may very well ask himself, 'Am I by this act giving direct aid to our enemies?' "—*C. S. Rice*



She was on him like a tigress, beating at him with both fists

LADY IN BLACK

By VINCENT AAGAARD

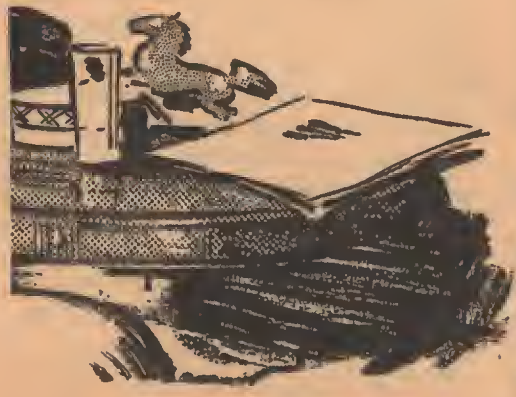
JACK CORBIN was not having fun, though almost any other male in the country would have glady traded places with him at the moment. Corbin was dunking screenland's number one glamour gal, the gorgeous delovely Laura Lee in a tub of icy water. And, strangely enough, the lady in question did not object to this ungodly procedure. Not right away, anyhow. She was very nicely swacked, completely blotto, and had been on the point of passing out before Corbin resorted to this drastic treatment in an effort to shock her out of it.

Laura Lee was a natural redhead with hair that glowed like polished mahogany. She was a mixture of angel and devil, and the devil peeked out of her eyes—when they were able to focus. She possessed everything necessary to give her sex appeal in colossal quantities and even now, when there was no inner spark to make it glow, Corbin felt the attraction that made her tops as a box-office draw all over the country. He had known her for years, when her name was Gertrude Stumpf and before she had clicked in pictures and been sky-rocketed to stardom.

He knew that ordinarily she did not drink to excess, but now she had been hitting the bottle steadily for a week, ever since a rising young leading man, Don Galbraith has been found dead in his garage from breathing exhaust fumes. She and Galbraith had been building up a romance that looked serious, and Laura was taking his death hard.

She came suddenly to life in the tub. She jerked up straight and let out a blood-curdling yell. With a heaving splash she surged up out of the tub and landed on her feet on the tile floor, splattering water all over Corbin and the carrara-glass bathroom. She began to dance up and down, cursing him.

"Damn you, Jack Corbin!" she yelled and stopped dancing. Instead she just shivered and shook, standing



She was beautiful anyway, but drunk and soaked to the skin in that dress— well you forgot about such things as murder

there with water streaming off her to form a lake on the tiles.

Corbin gulped; he couldn't help it. The immersion caused the satin of her dinner gown to cling like wet tissue paper, molding every curve of her shapely body. He was gazing on the female form divine and no fooling.

"Well!" she got out through chattering teeth. "Don't just stand there. Do something. I'm freezing."

He jumped, noticing that goose pimples had popped out all over the wet alabaster of her skin and that her lips were actually turning blue. He grabbed up a towel the size of a blanket, slung it around her and growled:

"This *would* be your maid's night off. Here. Peel off those duds and give yourself a rubdown."

CORBIN was Laura Lee's business manager—had been Galbraith's too — which meant he practically played nursemaid to her, straightening out all her grief, like this now. He did it for others too. He was *the* John Corbin, money manager for the stars, personal budgeteer for half the big shots in Hollywood. They turned their pay checks over to him and he budgeted their money, paid all bills and taxes, and doled out a small amount weekly for personal expenses. That was as far as his service was supposed to go, but it always went farther. He was friend and personal adviser, and the first one they telephoned when they got into any kind of a jam.

"What a dirty trick to play on a lady when she isn't looking!" Laura said, a smile sparkling in her eyes and rippling her generous mouth.

She seemed entirely sober now; no hangover yet and her eyes weren't even bloodshot. Exhilarated by her ducking, she was a vision wrapped in a towel and the dampness of her hair released a perfume that went to his head. Drawn irresistibly, Corbin gripped her shoulders, leaned to kiss her—and a voice from the next room spoiled the moment.

The voice said, "Here's the coffee. How's she coming?"

The voice belonged to Bob LeFever. He was Laura's agent and he took a personal as well as a financial interest in her, and had been actively consoling her since Don Galbraith's death. It was he who had called Corbin to help straighten her out, knowing the two were old friends and that Corbin had a way with drunks and ladies.

"Okay," Corbin grumbled, releasing Laura and swinging to the door. He said, "Snap it up, Gertrude," over his shoulder and went out into the master bedroom of the new Lee domicile.

LeFever was setting a tray on a stand beside the bed. He was a little guy with shiny black hair and a smooth olive face. He looked clean and immaculate and had a flair for expensive, conservative clothes. He was big time. He made money and he spent it.

"How is she?" he asked, straightening up.

"She'll do," Corbin muttered and leaned against the wall with hands sunk in his pockets. His freckled, pleasantly homely face was set in dour lines now and looked almost petulant. There was a steaming pot of coffee, a cup and saucer, on the tray. LeFever had been down in the kitchen brewing the java and Corbin was griped because he'd come back just when he did.

When Laura Lee walked out of the bathroom wrapped in another towel, LeFever blinked surprised dark eyes and whistled.

"Hiya, Bobby," she greeted him, waving a casual hand.

"Holy jumped-up Moses, what a

quick comeback!" He looked admiringly at Corbin. "I've got to hand it to you, boy. You know how to bring 'em out of it. What'd you do to her?"

"What *didn't* he do to me?" Laura said and Corbin grunted, shoving her toward the four-poster.

"Get in there, Lady Trouble. And don't get out till morning. You're all through this little binge."

She tumbled obediently into bed, snuggling under the covers, and LeFever slid the tray onto her lap.

"There you are, kiddo. Drink that, hot and black."

He poured the cup full and, smiling at him, she lifted it and tested the heat with a sip while Corbin scowled at them. LeFever waggled an admonishing finger at her, lectured:

"Listen: I've got to tear along; I have an appointment early in the morning and I need shut-eye. But you lay off the bottle and get straightened out, darling. They start shooting on your next picture in three days. If you aren't ready they just might not pick up your option, and it's almost option time."

"I'll be ready, Bobby," she promised, murmuring into her coffee.

"Okay. Take care of her, will you, Jack?"

"Yeah," Corbin said and watched LeFever leave the room, heard him go along the hall and start down the stairs. The house was two-storied but not overly large, a modest New England Colonial shack.

Laura crooked a finger at him. "Come here, Jack."

HE CAME to the edge of the bed and she pulled him down to a sitting position. "I'm sorry I've been such a stinker, Jack," she told him wistfully.

"Sure, baby, I understand." His face began to relax in a smile, but before he could say anything else a telephone bell rang. Laura indicated the telephone on a near table with her eyes and he got it, lifted the receiver. "Yes?"

"Jack? That you, Corbin? I called your secretary and she said you might be at Laura Lee's house. This is Cleve Tuttle."

Tuttle had been Don Galbraith's pal; they had lived together and he had acted as the leading man's stand-in. Interest sparked in Corbin's brain.

"Yes. What is it?"

"Listen! I want you to come out and see me. I've found something: a letter Don left hidden in my things and addressed to me. I just found it and it's marked 'Not to be opened while I live.' In it he tells that his life was threatened and he tells who did it and why. This is almost proof that he was murdered—get it? But I want to talk to you about it before calling the police. You'll know how to handle it better than I do."

"What? Who does he say——?"

"I don't want to name any names over the phone." Tuttle's voice was tense with suppressed excitement. "I might be overheard. Besides, I want to be sure I'm right. But you'll be bowled over when you learn——"

"I'll be right out," Corbin said. "At your place, huh?"

"Check," Tuttle replied and Corbin slowly cradled the receiver.

He had never been satisfied that Galbraith's death was accidental, the verdict the coroner's jury had returned. Galbraith had been found behind the wheel of his car and the ignition was still switched on, the gas tank empty. The garage doors were closed, which made it look funny, but a post mortem had disclosed enough alcohol in his brain to make him thoroughly intoxicated. The jury figured Galbraith had been too cockeyed to know what he was

doing, that he had come home that night or in the early hours of the morning, driven into the garage and closed the doors, got back in behind the wheel with the motor running and gone to sleep. Monoxide gas from the exhaust had done the rest. They passed over the contusion on his forehead on the assumption it had been caused by his head falling against the steering wheel.

Corbin looked at Laura and instantly knew she had heard most, at least, of what Tuttle had said over the phone. Her face was strained and her lips began to work. She choked out:

"It's about Don!"

Staring at him, an unnatural brightness shimmered into her eyes. He moved back to the bed and gripped her arm.

"No," he lied soothingly. "It's nothing, kid. Nothing . . ."

Her chin quivered and two big tears spilled out of her eyes, dropping to the counterpane. She wept quietly, without sound or motion. Corbin had to spend quite a little time comforting her before he could get away.

LEAVING the house finally, he pointed the nose of his Packard toward the beach and lead-footed the accelerator. The convertible made a blue-gray streak through the night, shooting out Wilshire from Beverly Hills. Corbin was in a tearing hurry, and whenever you're in that much of a hurry something is sure to happen. It happened to him.

His left rear tire picked up a nail or something and went flat. He was about halfway to the beach then and on a lonely stretch of road. He got out, cursing himself and his luck. He always remembered in times like this that he'd been born on a pool table in Reno, and it seemed he'd been behind the eight ball ever since.

Changing to the spare took him fifteen minutes or so, and then he was on his way again. Cleve Tuttle still lived in the bachelor quarters he had shared with Galbraith, a miniature castle perched on the side of the palisades north of Santa Monica. You had to climb a winding, torturous road from the beach level below to reach it.

Corbin was zooming up this road in second gear when headlights shot out of a curve ahead of him. A car going like a bat out of hell rushed down at him and for one tight second it looked like a head-on collision. The other car's brakes wailed and it swayed, headlight glare momentarily blinding Corbin as he veered over to the right edge of the paving.

Then the car was whistling past him and his lights picked up an instantaneous flash of the driver. It was a woman in black, veiled, and he got the impression she looked like Laura Lee. That was crazy of course, because he'd left her home in bed.

He cursed the woman driver, whoever she was, then dismissed her from his mind and gunned the motor again. In front of Tuttle's place he pulled up behind a parked small coupe, cut lights and ignition, jack-knifed out and looked up the long flight of stone steps to the house. The front door was open and a shaft of bright light poured out of it. He started up the steps.

When he got halfway up them a girl suddenly appeared in the doorway. She was a tiny girl with smooth blue-black hair and an exquisitely voluptuous figure, the contours of which showed through a flame-colored evening gown, silhouetted by the bright inner light.

But Corbin didn't pay much attention right then to that interesting silhouette. His attention was caught by the wicked glitter of a little gun in her right hand; in her left she clutched a

piece of white paper. She was as surprised as he and they both stood motionless for a tense moment. Then he said, "Hey! Don't point that thing at me!"

Her face was in shadow and he couldn't see the expression on it, but a sort of shudder jerked her body and the little gun in her hand began to spit at him. A slug went *phht!* past Corbin's ear and he yelped and dived for the shrubbery alongside the steps. Not in the habit of packing artillery, he was unarmed.

Lead whistled after him, peppering the underbruth as he burrowed through it. Then he heard heels clicking a fast tattoo down the steps. When he stood up and fought his way out of the shrubs so he could see, the biddy with the heater was in the coupe down below and had got it started rolling downhill.

Corbin whistled with relief and swabbed the sweat off his brow. He went cautiously and slowly on up to the front door and peeked inside. The long low-ceilinged living room was uninhabited. He slid in, then saw an open door —and a pair of legs stretched out on the rug beyond it.

HE FELT suddenly weak and empty and something in the pit of his stomach began churning over and over. He knew whom those legs belonged to even before he crossed the room to the open doorway. Standing there, looking down, Corbin swore in a harsh whisper.

Cleve Tuttle lay face down on the floor of a bedroom. He had been shot in the back twice. There wasn't much blood but he was just as dead as if there had been.

Corbin, thinking of the letter Tuttle had told him about over the phone, knelt and began reluctantly to search the dead man's clothes for it. He didn't expect to find it and he didn't. He remembered the piece of paper the impulsive gal with the gun had clutched in one hand. He had a hunch who the babe was and, when in a further half-hearted search of the room he discovered a jeweled Spanish comb on the floor behind the door, he was certain.

Nita Vasquez: a hot tamale in any language, and hers happened to be Mexican. A featured player in pictures, she'd been on the make for Don Galbraith who had given her the go-by for Laura Lee. Corbin thought of the old saw about the fury of a woman scorned. And the Vasquez biddy was full of the old hot Spanish blood. She was passionate and emotional, a spitfire. Hell, she could easily have plotted Don Galbraith's death in revenge for his having spurned her. She'd hate him for that. And she had killed Tuttle too, to get the letter that would incriminate her in Galbraith's death.

This was a matter for the police. Corbin strode out into the living room and spotted the telephone. He dialed operator before noticing there was no power hum. The line was dead. It had been cut somewhere outside.

He swore, then an idea hit him. From a shelf under the telephone he fished out a leather-bound directory of confidential unlisted numbers belonging to prominent picture players and officials in the industry, flipped the pages to the Vs. Nita Vasquez was entered with an address at Malibu.

Malibu wasn't many miles away, and the important thing was to get that letter if possible before Nita destroyed it. The cops could wait. Corbin recalled she had emptied her gun at him, and he thought he could handle her if she didn't have any other artillery concealed on her person. He decided to take a chance and was on his way. Dousing the lights and closing the front door, he

took the steps down to his car two at a time.

THE Vasquez shack was a low bungalow facing a smooth sandy beach that sloped down to be caressed by rolling ocean breakers. The house was in darkness when Corbin approached it after leaving his car back on the highway. He soft-footed up to the front door, tried it. Locked.

The back entrance proved to be secured also, but it was a warm night and he found a window open at the side. He got out a penknife, sending a look down the beach before using it on the screen. Three houses away a midnight bathing party was sending shrill screams of laughter into the night, and in the light cast from the windows he caught the white flash of figures running for the water. But they were intent on their play and no one had noticed him. Ripping open the screen, he thrust a hand inside and found the catch, and in a moment was standing within. A deliciously intimate scent engulfed him and he guessed he had entered a bedroom.

Then, above the sounds of the beach party, he heard the purr of an approaching motor along the road from the highway, saw the jouncing glare of headlights as they flashed past the window. The car was pulling up outside.

Corbin's nerves tightened and he stayed put, beside the window, listening. A key made clicking sounds at the front door. Somebody entered, closed the door and switched on lights in the living room. The light filtered back here through an open doorway, showing Corbin the bedroom he was in.

There was movement in the front room, the clink of glass against glass. Corbin moved to the bedroom door, peered across a hallway and through another door into a living room furnished in modern rattan, Hawaiian style. Nita Vasquez was standing in the middle of the room in her flame-colored evening gown. She had a drink in one hand which she downed in a gulp, and in a flare of emotion threw the empty glass at the divan.

Then she began to pace back and forth like a little jungle cat, glaring at the piece of paper she held in one hand. Her eyes had a hot flashing brightness and the turbulence of her breathing stirred her breasts, flared her nostrils.

Corbin could see her bag and white fur evening wrap which she had dropped on one end of the divan, but the gun wasn't there, and she did not have it in her hand now either. The only thing she had in her hands was that piece of paper, which he was sure was the letter Tuttle had phoned him about. He slipped out into the hall and waited till she approached the doorway. When she turned on her heel away from it he stepped out and said:

"Hold it, Nita."

She jumped and whirled to face him. He grabbed her and she was suddenly a fighting, clawing fury in his arms. But he clamped her to him, smothered her in his embrace, pinning her arms down to her sides. She spat out incoherent Spanish oaths at him, climaxing them with:

"Let me go, you—you peeg! You sonofadog!" Then her eyes widened and her struggles gradually subsided as she stared up into his face. "You—you are Jack Corbin!"

"Right, baby," Corbin admitted. He was famous in his own way among the celebrities of pictureville. "And I'm turning you in to the cops for knocking off Cleve Tuttle and Don Galbraith. How do you like them grapenuts?"

"No! I—I deed not do it. No—no!"

"Don't jive me, Nita. If you didn't

do it, why'd you snipe at me when you came out of Tuttle's place? If I hadn't taken a dive when I did, I'd be with Tuttle and Galbraith now."

"I deed not know it was you. I deed not know what I was doing. All I could think of was to get away from there."

"Yeah?" he said skeptically. "Let me see that letter."

THE letter had fallen to the floor. Pushing her away, but watching her closely, he stooped and picked it up. He saw at once that he held only the upper portion of the note. The bottom part was missing, had been torn away. Quickly he read the lines of inked script on the crumpled piece he held.

Dear Cleve,

If you read this I will be dead. My life has been threatened and I don't know whether to take the threats seriously or not. But I am writing this to make sure my murderer will be brought to justice in case any of the threats are carried out.

It has been my fortune, or misfortune, to become embroiled in a couple of love affairs since I became a "discovery" in this dizzy cinema world. But you know and I know that I never did and do not plan to ever marry anyone. But it seems a guy in the public eye can't play around without getting involved rather deeply and having to face some pretty serious (threatened) consequences. However, no matter what the consequences, my career still comes first.

If I am found dead under mysterous or questionable circumstances, look for
threatened my life b

Corbin looked up. "Where's the rest of this?"

Nita was standing still, staring at him with her dark glowing eyes. "She —she has eet. The senorita who keel Cleve."

"Yeah?" Corbin made his voice rough. "What senorita?"

"I do not know. I go to see Cleve tonight and he tell me he 'ave a visitor coming, that I should not 'ave come. Then someone she drive up outside and he send me into bedroom, tell me to stay there. Then thees senorita, she comes in. I hear her ask heem for a letter. She 'ave a throaty, deep voice. And I peek out. She is dressed all in black with a veil and I cannot tell who eet ees, but she 'ave a gun and she is point it at Cleve and he is handing her thees note—thees *paper*. She take it weeth one hand, but he does not let go thees part, and very queek he hit her, whirl and jump for the door where I am. The paper tears in two pieces. He 'ave one and she 'ave one, as she falls down. But on the floor she shoot t'ree times and Cleve fall forward through door. I slam the door and lock heem queeck. I am very frightened, but I find gun in the table drawer by the bed, and I shoot through the door as she tries to open it. I shoot some more and I scream, and she become frighten and run away."

ALL this was told in a swift rush of words, with gestures, and Nita's eyes were shining with excitement. "Then I see Cleve is dead and I take the paper in his hand, but I no can make the sense from it. Pretty soon I open the door and creep out to the next room. The front door is open. I go out and then you are coming up. I am much frightened still, so I shoot at you and run away. I did not know where to go, what to do. I drove around for a while

(Continued on page 262)

WANTED BY THE FBI

Acting in cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mammoth Detective presents the following line-up of wanted criminals. If you have a clue that might result in their capture, notify your local FBI office or Mammoth Detective at once.

WANTED

MAURICE DENNING, with aliases: C. BUSH, MAURICE DEEMING, LEE DENNING, LEO DENNING, LEON DENNING, M. DENNING, MORRIS DENNING, —— HARRIS, —— SYNIGARD, —— WELLS, "BLONDIE," "BUBBLES," "SAM."

BANK ROBBERY

DESCRIPTION

Age, 36 years, born March 21, 1907; Houghton, Lee County, Iowa; Height, 5 feet, 6 inches; Weight, 145 pounds; Eyes, blue; Hair, light brown; Complexion, ruddy; Build, medium; Race, white; Nationality, American; Occupation, salesman, farmer; Peculiarities, possesses likeable disposition, dresses neatly.

CRIMINAL RECORD

Maurice Denning has been arrested and convicted three times in Iowa.

An indictment was returned by a Federal Grand Jury at Lincoln, Nebraska, December 14, 1934, charging subject and others with robbery of the Security National Bank, Superior, Nebraska on November 22, 1934. He is also wanted for numerous other bank robberies.





WANTED

BROADUS BAILEY McCURRY, with aliases: BROADDUS McCURRY, B. B. McCURRY, PETE McCURRY, "PETE."

FEDERAL RESERVE ACT

DESCRIPTION

Age, 34 years, born May 18, 1909, Coryell County, Texas; Height, 5 feet, 7 inches; Weight, 135 pounds; Eyes, brown; Hair, brown, slightly wavy; Complexion, dark, sallow; Build, slender; Race, white; Nationality, American; Education, high school; Occupation, bank teller; Scars and marks, ½ inch indistinct scar on forehead, appendectomy scar; Peculiarities, enthusiastic baseball and football fan.

CRIMINAL RECORD
(none known)

An indictment was returned by a Federal Grand Jury at El Paso, Texas, January 5, 1943, charging subject with a violation of the Federal Reserve Act in that he did on or about February 10, 1940, wilfully, unlawfully, and with intent to defraud, embezzle and convert to his own use certain monies of the First State Bank, Monahans, Texas.

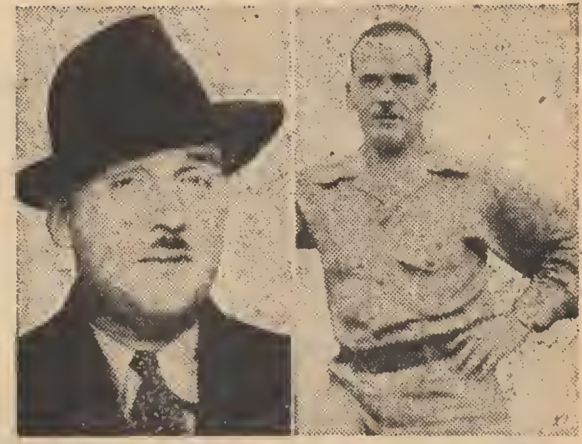
WANTED

ALLAN KRAMER

IMPERSONATION

DESCRIPTION

Age, 41 years, date and place of birth not known; Height, 5 feet, 7 inches; Weight, 160 pounds; Eyes, blue-gray; Hair, dark brown, wavy, thin on top, gray at temples; Complexion, ruddy; Build, medium; Race, white (Jewish); Nationality, American; Occupation, confidence man; Scars and marks, several teeth missing right upper jaw, several lower teeth chipped; Peculiarities, short pudgy hands, persuasive manner, convincing talker with slight Southern accent but uses poor grammar, complains of backache, usually wears small mustache, sometimes wears rimless glasses, usually wears sweaters, borrows money on various pretexts representing himself as member of wealthy family, good duckpin bowler.



RELATIVES
(none known)

CRIMINAL RECORD
(none known)

An indictment in four counts was returned by a Federal Grand Jury at Boston, Massachusetts, on March 1, 1940, charging subject as Allan Kramer with violation of the Federal Impersonation Statute in that he did, on or about February 13, 15, and 16, 1940, at Boston, Massachusetts, unlawfully and with intent to defraud, obtain certain services and money by falsely assuming and pretending to be an officer of the U. S. Government.

An indictment was returned by a Federal Grand Jury at Shelby, North Carolina, on March 18, 1941, charging subject as Allan Kramer with violation of the Federal Impersonation Statute in that he did, between February 26, 1940, and April 16, 1940, at Charlotte, North Carolina, unlawfully and with intent to defraud, obtain certain money by falsely assuming and pretending to be an officer of the U. S. Government.



WANTED

LEE WELLINGTON OSBORNE, with aliases: LEE HUDSON, L. W. OSBORN, LEE OSBORN, L. W. OSBORNE, LEE OSBORNE, LEE W. OSBORNE, LEO OSBORNE, LEONARD STRONG, LEE OSBORNE WELLINGTON.

UNLAWFUL FLIGHT TO AVOID PROSECUTION (BURGLARY)

DESCRIPTION

Age, 43 years (born January 21, 1809, San Jose, California); Height, 5 feet, 8 inches; Weight, 160 pounds; Eyes, gray-brown; Hair, brown; Complexion, medium; Build, medium; Race, white; Nationality, American; Education, third grade; Occupation, painter; Scars and marks, cut scar rear scalp, cut scar right chin, vaccination scar upper left arm, 2 scars left breast, scar left hip, scar back left shoulder.

CRIMINAL RECORD

As Lee Osborn, No. 28420, arrested Police Department, San Francisco, California, Septemher 22, 1918; charge, grand larceny; disposition, indeterminate sentence, escaped January 12, 1910.

As L. W. Osborne, No. 712, arrested Sheriff's Office, Redwood City, California, February 9, 1928; charga, higamy; dispo-sition, 1 to 10 years.

As Lee Wellington Osborne, No. 44956, received Stata Penitentiary, San Quentin, California, Fehruary 28, 1928; crime, bigamy; sentence, 1 to 10 years, paroled April 24, 1930, discharged from parole April 4, 1931.

As Lea Wellington Osborne, No. 2006, arrested Police Department, Berkeley, California, December 16, 1931; charge, outsida burglary; disposition, released to Police Department, Piedmont, California.

Ae Lee Wellington Osborne, No. 448, arrested Police Department, Piedmont, California, Decemher 16, 1031; charga, investigation, burglary; disposition, released to Sheriff's Office, Oakland, California.

As Lee Wellington Osborne, No. 16724, arrested Sheriff's Office, Oakland, California, January 2, 1032; charge, burglary; disposition, 1 to 5 yeare.

As Lee Wellington Osborne, No. 17668, received Folsom Prison, Represa, California, February 27, 1932; crime, burglary; sentence, 1 to 5 years, paroled March 29, 1935.

* As Lee Osborne, No. 28420, arrested Police Department, San Francisco, California, Novemher 7, 1935; charge, possession firearme; disposition, parole revoked, sentenced 1 to 5 years concurrent with unexpired term.

Ae Lee Osborne, No. 20362, received Folsom Prison, Represe, California, May 19, 1036; crime, possession firearms, parole violation; sentence, 1 to 5 years concurrent with unexpired term, transferred to Highway Camp No. 32, October 1, 1938, discharged July 24, 1939.

As Lee Osborne, No. 64, arrested Police Department, North Platta, Nebraska, May 9, 1940; charge, investigation, abortchanga; disposition, released on hond, forfeited.

An indictment was returned hy a Federal Grand Jury at San Francisco, California, on October 29, 1941, charging subject as Lee Osborne with a violation of the Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution Statuta in that he did on or about May 11, 1940, unlawfully travel in interstate commerce from San Francisco, California, to North Platte, Nebraska, to avoid prosecution for burglary, said crima having been committed at San Francisco, California, on the night of April 13, 1940.

* Represents notation unsupported by fingerprints.

WANTED

CLYDE BROWN, with aliases: CORNELIUS BROWN, CORNELIUS CLYDE BROWN, "BUD," "BUDD," "BURT."

NATIONAL MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT ACT

DESCRIPTION

Age, 24 years, born June 5, 1918, Cincinnati, Ohio; Height, 5 feet, 10 inches; Weight, 102 pounds; Eyes, light gray; Hair, brown; Complexion, fair; Build, medium, muscular; Race, white; Nationality, American; Occupation, painter, laborer; Scars and marks, tattoo, heart and word "Bud" inner right forearm; tattoo, "C.L." upper right arm; tattoo, "M.R." inner left forearm; scar first joint right thumb; Peculiarities, has been confined as feeble minded, heavy drinker, frequents poolrooms.

CRIMINAL RECORD

* Ae Cornelius Clyde Brown, No. ....., arrested Juvenile authorities, Cincinnati, Ohio, July 8, 1927; charga, juvenile delinquency; disposition, confined Glenview Boys School, Glendale, Ohio, escaped.

* Ae Cornelius Brown, No. 21958, arrested Police Department, Cincinnati, Ohio, November 9, 1930; charge, assault and battery, juvenile delinquent, escape; disposition, returned Glenview Boys School, Glendale, Ohio, November 20, 1930, escaped.

* Ae Cornelius Brown, No. 8515, arrested Police Department, Cincinnati, Ohio, May 8, 1931; charga, juvenile delinquency, escape; disposition, returnad Glenview Boys School, Glendale, Ohio, released March 7, 1933.

* As Cornelius Brown, No. 6483, arrested Police Department, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 27, 1033; charge, juvenile delinquency; disposition, indafinite probation.

* As Clyde Brown, No. 2370, arrested Police Department, Cincinnatt, Ohio, February 12, 1935; charge, auto theft; disposition, released.

* As Clyde Brown, No. 1205, arrested Police Department, Cincinnati, Ohio, July 22, 1935; charge, juvenila delinquency; disposition, committed to Institution for Feeble-Minded, Columhus, Ohio, July 25, 1935, escaped.

As Clyde Brown, No. 10185, arrested Polica Department, Kent, Ohio, December 20, 1935; charge, escapo; disposition, returned to Institution for Feehle-Minded, Columhus, Ohio, escaped.

* As Cornelius Clyde Brown, No. 20752, arrested Police Departmant, Cincinnati, Ohio, August 1, 1036; charge, escape; disposition, returned to Institution for Feebla-Minded, Columbus, Ohio.

As Clyda Brown, No. 32294, arrested Police Department, Cincinnati, Ohio, Septemher 12, 1036; cherge, auto theft; disposition, released.

* As Clyde Brown, No. ....., arrested Police Department, Berea, Kentucky, December 4, 1936; charge, auto theft; disposition, released to U. S. Marshal, Lexington, Kentucky.

* As Clyde Brown, No. 195, arrested U. S. Marshal, Lexington, Kentucky, December 5, 1936; charge, National Motor Vahicle Theft Act; disposition, released to Juvenile authorities, Cincinnati, Ohio.

* As Clyde Brown, No. ....., arrested Police Department, Cincinnati, Ohio, July 12, 1937; cherge, petty larceny; disposition, 5 days.

* As Clyde Brown, No. 59294, received Workhouse, Cincinnati, Ohio, July 12, 1937; crime, petty larceny; eentence, 5 days.

* As Clyde Brown, No. 32294, arrested Police Department, Cincinnati, Ohio, Novamber 7, 1938; charge, auto theft; disposition, 1 to 20 years.

As Clyde Brown, No. 37188, received State Reformatory, Menefield, Ohio, January 18, 1939; crime, auto theft; sentence, 1 to 20 years; transferred to Honor Camp, Sandusky, Ohio, escaped June 19, 1040.

On December 10, 1940, an indictment was returned by a Federal Grand Jury at Danver, Colorado, charging subject as Clyde Brown with a violation of the National Motor Vehicla Theft Act tn that he did on or about June 19, 1940, unlawfully transport a stolen automobile in interstate commerce from Sandusky, Ohio, to Denver, Colorado, knowing same to have been stolen.

* Rapresents notatione unsupported by fingerprints.

Missing Page

Pages 261-276



IS THIS MURDER OR SUICIDE?

Here is a picture mystery to test your powers of deduction. All the clues necessary to make a decision are shown in the picture. Study them carefully. In five minutes you should have the solution. However, to aid you in deducing the facts, the dead man is George Preston, a prominent manufacturer. The girl is Marguerite Weatherall, his private secretary, who discovered the body upon entering his office in the morning, and immediately called police. Was Preston murdered, or not? Answer on p. 272. a, an arg,